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Mystics and Saints of Islam

MYSTICS AND SAINTS OF ISLAM

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12.3.41

LONDON:
FRANCIS GRIFFITHS,
34 MAIDEN LANE, STRAND, W.C.
1910.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	PATHEISTIC SUFISM	I
II.	HASAN BASRI	18
III.	RABIA, THE WOMAN SUFI	28
IV.	IBRAHIM BEN ADHAM	36
V.	FUDHAYL BEN AYAZ	46
VI.	BAYAZID BASTAMI	52
VII.	ZU'N NUN OF EGYPT...	60
VIII.	MANSUR HALLAJ	68
IX.	HABIB AJAMI	79
X.	AVICENNA (IBN SINA)	86
XI.	AL GHAZZALI	106
XII.	FARIDUDDIN ATTAR	123
XIII.	SUHRAWARDY	141
XIV.	JALALUDDIN RUMI	148
XV.	SHARANI, THE EGYPTIAN	164
XVI.	MULLAH SHAH	174
APPENDIX I.	MOHAMMEDAN CONVERSIONS ...	192
„ II.	EXPOSITION OF SUFISM	196
„ III.	CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS IN MOHAMMEDAN LITERATURE	202
„ IV.	CHRIST IN MOHAMMEDAN TRADITION	208

PREFACE

It is a custom in some quarters to represent Mohammadan mysticism as merely a late importation into Islam, and an altogether alien element in it. But however much later Islamic mysticism may have derived from Christian, Neo-platonic, and Buddhist sources, there is little doubt that the roots of mysticism are to be found in the Koran itself. The following verse is an instance: "God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche in which is a lamp, the lamp encased in glass—the glass as it were a glistening star. From a blessed tree is it lighted, the olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would well nigh shine out even though fire touched it not! It is light upon light!" (*Koran Sura* 24).

Indeed it seems strange to accord the title of "a practical mystic" to Cromwell and to deny it to Mohammad, whose proclivity for religious meditation was so strong that the Arabs used to say "Muhammad is in love with his Maker,"* and whose sense of the "terror of the Lord" was so intense that it turned his hair prematurely white. Many of the reported sayings of the Early Companions of Muhammad show that they shared this terror. "Verily, you shall see hell, you shall see it with the eye of certainty" says the Koran, and they thought it very probable. Thus Ali exclaimed "Alas for the shortness of the provision

*Ghazzali, Munqidh.

and the terrors of the way!" Abu'l Darda said "If ye knew what ye shall see after death, ye would not eat nor drink, and I wish that I were a tree that is lopped and then devoured."*

This "fear of the Lord" led naturally to an almost fierce asceticism. Abu Bekr and Ali both founded communities of ascetics,* and during the first and second centuries of Islam there were many orthodox mystics. Professor Nicholson in the work just quoted, rightly says "I do not think that we need look beyond Islam for the origin of the Sufi doctrines. . . The early Sufis are still on orthodox ground, their relation to Islam is not unlike that of the mediæval Spanish mystics to the Roman Catholic Church."

The following sketches are for the most part translations of papers by continental scholars such as Alfred Von Kremer, Pavet de Courteille, and A. F. Mehren. The essays on Ghazzali and Jalaluddin Rumi are, however, founded on original study of those writers. The translator hopes a wholesome tonic may be found in some of these Moslem mystics at a time when many "Christian" pulpits and presses seem anxious to dilute Christianity "into a presumptuous and effeminate love which never knew fear."*

He desires to thank the Editors of the *Expository Times, Church Missionary Review, Irish Church Quarterly,* and *London Quarterly Review* for permission to include papers which have appeared in those journals.

C.F.

*Nicholson. Literary History of the Arabs (p. 225).
†Tholuck. Sufismus. ‡Sir John Seeley.

CHAPTER I

PANTHEISTIC SUFISM*

I.—THE IMPORT OF ISLAMIC MYSTICISM

THE moral law proclaimed by Moses three thousand years ago agrees with that which governs men to-day, irrespective of their various stages of culture; the moral precepts of a Buddha and Confucius agree with those of the Gospel, and the sins for which, according to the Book of the Dead of the ancient Egyptians, men will answer to the judges of the other world are sins still after four thousand years. If the nature of the unknown First Cause is ever to be grasped at all, it can only be in the light of those unchanging moral principles which every man carries in his own breast. The idea of God is therefore not an affair of the understanding, but of the feeling and conscience. Mysticism has always so taken it, and has therefore always had a strong attraction for the excitable and emotional portion of mankind whom it has comforted in trial and affliction. Every religion is accordingly rather intended for the emotions than for the understanding, and therefore they all contain mystical tendencies. The mysticism of Islam and Christendom have many points of contact, and by mysticism perhaps will be first bridged the wide gulf which separates Islam from

*From Von Kremer.

Christendom, and thereby from modern civilisation. Just in proportion as the various religions express the ideals of goodness and truth they approximate to one another as manifestations of the unchanging moral principle. Inasmuch as they surmised this, the Motazilites (or free-thinkers in Islam), at a time when Europe lay in the profoundest intellectual and moral bewilderment, fought for one of those ideas which, although they are quickly submerged again in the stormy current of the times, continue to work in silence and finally emerge victorious. On that day when the Moslem no longer beholds in God simply omnipotence, but also righteousness, he will simultaneously re-enter the circle of the great civilised nations among whom he once before, though only for a short time, had won the first place.

It is not perhaps too fanciful to hail, as an omen of the triumph of moral mysticism over the dogmatic rigidity of Islam, the fact that the present Sultan Muhammad V. was girded with the sword of Osman by the head of the Mevlevi dervishes, a sect founded by the great mystic teacher Jalaluddin Rumi of Iconium. Forty-three years ago a Persian Orientalist Mirza Kasim Beg wrote in the *Journal Asiatique* :—

" L'unique voie qui dans l'Islam puisse conduire a la reforme c'est la doctrine du mysticisme."

II.—EARLIER PHASES

The period during which the asceticism practised by the earlier Sufis passed into the dreamy pantheism

which characterises the later Sufism is the end of the third century after Muhammad. This introduced a new element into Islam which for centuries exercised a powerful influence on national culture, and is still partially operative at present. The conception of God and of the relation of the finite and human with the infinite and divine from this time onward formed the chief subject of inquiry and meditation.

The man who was destined to be the first to give those ideas, which had hitherto been foreign to Arabian Sufism, definite expression was a poor workman, a cotton-carder, bearing the name of Hellaj. He was an Arabised Persian, born in Persia, but educated in Irak, where he enjoyed the privilege of being instructed by Junaid. The story of his life as handed down by Shiah or Sunni writers has been much exaggerated. It is clear, however, that he had a great number of disciples who revered him as their spiritual guide and ascribed to him almost supernatural powers. His ever-growing popularity much scandalised the orthodox mullahs, who moved the authorities to proceed against him, and were successful in procuring his execution 922 A.D. Before his death he was subjected to terrible tortures, which he bore with wonderful composure.

The reason of his condemnation was declared to be that he regarded himself as an incarnation of the Godhead. His disciples honoured him as a saint after his death. They ascribed to him the famous saying, " I am the Truth " (*i.e.* God), which they took in a pantheistic sense. He is said to have taught the doctrine of the incarnation of the Godhead in a man and to have uttered the exclamation :

Praise to the Most High Who has revealed His humanity and concealed the overpowering splendour of His Deity. Whoso purifies himself by abstinence and purges himself from every trace of fleshiness, unto him the Spirit of God enters, as it entered into Jesus. When he has attained to this degree of perfection, whatever he wills, happens, and whatever he does is done by God.

His letters to his disciples are said to have commenced with the formula, "From the Lord of Lords to His slaves." His disciples wrote to him:

O Spirit of the Spirit! O highest Aim of the holy: We bear witness that Thou hast incarnated Thyself in the form of Hosain the cotton-carder (Hellaj). We flee for protection to Thee and hope in Thy mercy, O Knower of secrets.

The genuineness of these fragments has much to support it, but is not entirely beyond doubt. This much, however, is clear, that the disciples of Hellaj after his death regarded him as a divine being. Ibn Hazm, a trustworthy author who wrote only 150 years after the execution of Hellaj, says so expressly. Ghazzali, who wrote about fifty years later still, does not mention this, but shelters Hellaj from the charge of blasphemy by construing his exclamation "I am the Truth" in a pantheistic sense, and excuses it by ascribing it to an excess of love to God and to mystic ecstacy. In another place he says:

The first veil between God and His servant is His servant's soul. But the hidden depth of the human heart is divine and illuminated by light from above; for in it is mirrored the eternal Truth completely, so that it encloses the universe in itself. Now when a man turns his gaze on his own divinely illumined heart he is dazzled by the blaze of its beauty, and the expression "I am God!" easily escapes him. If from

this stage he does not advance further in knowledge, he often falls into error and is ruined. It is as though he had allowed himself to be misled by a little spark from the light-ocean of Godhead instead of pressing forward to get more light. The ground of this self-deception is that he in whom the Supernatural is mirrored confuses himself with it. So the colour of a picture seen in a mirror is sometimes confounded with the mirror itself.

Hellaj was no more than the representative of an old idea, Indian in origin, which he combined with Sufism, thereby giving an entirely new direction to Islamic thought, which was important, as leading to an entirely new development of the conception of God. Even previous to Hellaj, the doctrine of incarnation had emerged in Islam. The Caliph Ali was reported to have been such, and was accordingly venerated by the Shiahs. The sect of the Khattabiyah worshipped the Imam Jafar Sadik as God. Another sect believed that the Divine Spirit had descended upon Abdallah Ibn Amr.

In Khorassan the opinion was widely spread that Abu Muslim, the great general who overturned the dynasty of the Ommeyads and set up that of the Abbasides, was an incarnation of the spirit of God. In the same province under Al Mansur, the second Abbaside Caliph, a religious leader named Ostasys professes to be an emanation of the Godhead. He collected thousands of followers, and the movement was not suppressed without much fighting. Under the Caliph Mahdi a self-styled Avatar named Ata arose, who on account of a golden mask which he continually wore was called *Mokanna*, or " the veiled prophet." He also had a numerous following, and

held the Caliph's armies in check for several years, till in 779 A.D., being closely invested in his castle, he, with his whole harem and servants, put an end to themselves.

Towards the end of the second century after Muhammad, Babek in Persia taught the transmigration of souls and communism. His followers, named Khoramiyyah, long successfully resisted the Caliph's troops. He claimed that the soul of an ancient law-giver named " Bod " had passed into him, which meant perhaps that he wished to pass for a " Buddha."

It is well known that Shiite teachers were especially active in Persia. In the apotheosis of Ali, as well as in the cases of Abu Muslim, we find an assertion of the ideas peculiar to the Persians in pre-Islamic times. The infusion or indwelling of the Godhead in man as with the Hindu Avatars was also popular, and widely spread in Persia. In Bagdad, from the time of the early Abbasides, the Persians had exercised great influence. Shiahs were able to profess their views freely under the tolerant or rather religiously indifferent Caliph Mamoun. Bagdad early harboured within its walls a number of communities imbued with Shiah doctrine, and the Persian conception of God silently, but widely prevailed.

Hellaj, educated in the orthodox Sunni school of Junaid, which, through its laying stress on the idea of love to God, possessed rather a mystic than dogmatic character, allowed himself to be carried away by his passionate temperament into not only preaching, but practically applying to himself the above-mentioned doctrines, which though known to many, had been

discreetly veiled in reserve. When once the populace have been prepared for a new idea, the mere expression of it is sufficient to act as a spark on tinder. The fatal word was spoken by Hellaj ; the authorities did their duty, seized the daring innovator and put him to death in the cruel fashion of the time. But the word once spoken had been borne on the winds in all directions, and the execution of Hellaj gave a powerful impulse to the spread of his doctrine. There are periods in the lives of some nations when the longing for a martyr's crown becomes epidemic. A few years after the execution of Hellaj, a man of the people, Ibn Aby Azkyr, from the same village, Shalmaghan, where Hellaj had spent his youth, gave himself out as an incarnation of the Godhead. He was put to death with several of his followers under the reign of the Caliph Radhi, 933 A.D. A century after Hellaj an Egyptian, Ismail Darazy, from whom the Druses derive their name, proclaimed the Fatimite Caliph Hakim to be an incarnation.

How great was the influence exercised in general by those ideas for which Hellaj died a martyr's death we learn most clearly from the pages of Ghazzali, who wrote not quite two hundred years later. He says :

The speculations of the Sufis may be divided into two classes : to the first category belong all the phrases about love to God and union with Him, which according to them compensate for all outward works. Many of them allege that they have attained to complete oneness with God ; that for them the veil has been lifted ; that they have not only seen the Most High with their eyes, but have spoken with Him, and go so far as to say " The Most High spoke thus and thus." They wish to imitate Hellaj, who was crucified for using such expressions, and justify them-

selves by quoting his saying, " I am the Truth." They also refer to Abu Yazid Bistamy, who is reported to have exclaimed, " Praise be to me ! " instead of " Praise be to God ! " This kind of speculation is extremely dangerous for the common people, and it is notorious that a number of craftsmen have left their occupation to make similar assertions. Such speeches are highly popular, as they hold out to men the prospect of laying aside active work with the idea of purging the soul through mystical ecstasies and transports. The common people are not slow to claim similar rights for themselves and to catch up wild and whirling expressions. As regards the second class of Sufi speculation, it consists in the use of unintelligible phrases which by their outward apparent meaning and boldness attract attention, but which on closer inspection prove to be devoid of any real sense.

These words of the greatest thinker among the Muhammadans at that time afford us a deep insight into the remarkable character of the period. From them we gather with certainty that the division of Sufism into two classes, one orthodox and outwardly conforming to Islam, and the other free-thinking and pantheistic, was already an accomplished fact before Ghazzali's time. We recognise also that the latter kind of Sufism was very popular among the lowest classes of the people and even among the agricultural population. The fundamental characteristic of mysticism, the striving after the knowledge of God by way of ecstatic intuition, had already come into open conflict with the fundamental principles of Islam. " Mystical love to God " was the catchword which brought people to plunge into ecstatic reverie, and by complete immersion in contemplation to lose their personality, and by this self-annihilation to be absorbed in God. The simple ascetic character of the ancient

Arabian Sufism was continually counteracted by the element of passive contemplation which was entirely foreign to the Arab mind. The terms "ascetic" and "Sufi," which were formerly almost synonymous, henceforward cease to be so, and often conceal a fundamental variance with each other. We shall not go very far wrong if we connect the crisis of this intellectual development with the appearance of Hellaj, so that the close of the third and commencement of the fourth century after Muhammad marks the point of time when this philosophico-religious schism was completed. In Persia the theosophy of Hellaj and his supporters found a receptive soil and flourished vigorously; on that soil were reared the finest flowers of Persian poetry. From the Persians this tendency passed over to the Turks, and the poetry of both nations contains strongly-marked theosophical elements.

III.—THE LOVE OF GOD AND ECSTASY

Already in the second century of Islam great stress was laid upon the cultivation of love to God, an outstanding example of which is the female Sufi Rabia. With it was connected a gradually elaborated doctrine of ecstatic states and visions which were believed to lead by the way of intuition and divine illumination to the spiritual contemplation of God. We have already endeavoured to describe the religious enthusiasm which took possession of the Moslems in the first and second century after Muhammad and have partly traced the causes which led to this phenomenon.

Ecstasy is an invariable concomitant of religious enthusiasm. In the endeavour to break through the

narrow bounds which confine the human spirit pious and credulous natures are only too easily led astray. The instruments which man has at his command when he wishes to investigate the supernatural do not suffice to procure him an even approximately correct image of the object which he would fain observe. While the optician with the aid of mathematics can reduce errors arising from the convexity of his magnifying lens to an infinitesimally small amount, the theologian has never found a device, and never will find one, to obviate the errors which arise from the fact that his intellectual insight has to be exercised through the medium of material senses, which obscure the clearness of his observation. And yet it is precisely this ceaseless striving, this irresistible impulse after something higher, this unquenchable thirst for the fountain-head of knowledge, which constitutes the highest and noblest side of humanity, and is the most indubitable pledge of its spiritual future. The net result of these strivings has been an endless series of self-delusions, and yet humanity takes on a grander aspect in them than in all its other manifold efforts and successes. The history of this spiritual wrestling, this hopeless and yet never relaxed struggle against the impossible, forms the noblest aspect of the history of mankind.

The phenomena produced by Islam in this respect do not fundamentally differ from those produced by Christianity and Buddhism. Sufism exhibits a more remarkable development of these phenomena, simply because it grew up in an environment which favoured their more luxuriant growth.

The Koran, which Muhammad came, as he said to preach, was regarded as the very word of God, and must therefore have produced an overpowering impression on the minds of the faithful. Of this numerous instances are reported. Abd al Wahid ibn Zaid heard one day a Koran-reader recite the following verse (Sura 45: 28) :—" This is Our book, which announces to you the truth ; for We have caused to be recorded all that ye have done. Those who believe and do good works shall their Lord admit to His favour ; verily this is the most manifest recompense." On hearing this Abd al Wahid broke into loud weeping and fainted. Miswar ibn Machramah was not even able to hear any verse of the Koran read, being so powerfully affected thereby as to become senseless. Of Jobair ibn Motim it is reported that he said : " I heard the Prophet recite the following verses of the Koran :—

1. I swear by Tur.
2. By a book which stands written on outspread parchment.
3. By the house to which pilgrimage is made.
4. By the lofty dome of heaven.
5. And by the swelling ocean.
6. That the judgment of thy Lord is at hand.

Then it appeared to me," said Jobair, " as if my heart would burst in twain." The pious Cadi Ijad adduces as a special proof of the inspiration of the Koran the deep impression of fear and terror which its recital produced on the minds of the hearers.

Muhammad ibn Mansur relates that once passing a house at midnight he heard the voice of a man praying to God loudly and fervently, lamenting his sins with deep contrition. Muhammad ibn Mansur could not

resist the temptation ; he put his mouth to the keyhole and uttered the verse which threatens the unbelievers with hell-fire. He heard a heavy fall within the house, and all was still. As he went down the same street the next morning he saw a corpse being carried out of the same house, followed by an old woman. He inquired of her whose body it was, and she answered : " Last night my son heard a verse of the Koran recited, and it broke his heart." We are far from believing all these stories, but they show what a view was held in the earliest times regarding the effect produced by the Koran on the minds of those who heard it.

The ecstatic bent of mind of the ascetics of Islam and the later Sufis arose from these beginnings. Then, as now, self-originated phases of feeling were attributed to outer causes ; from the remotest times men have sought without them the Divinity which they carried within.

The wider spread and greater permanence of ecstatic phenomena among the Moslems than elsewhere was due to the concurrence of various conditions, chief among which was the peculiar temperament of the Arab. Capable of the fiercest momentary excitement, he quickly subsided into a state of complete apathy which is pain-proof. I* have a lively recollection of the cases mentioned by my late friend Dr. Bilharz, who spoke of the astonishing anæsthesia which the patients in the medical school of Kasr al 'ain in Cairo, where he was professor, exhibited under the most painful operations. They uttered hardly a sound when operated upon in the most sensitive nerve-centres. The negro, notoriously excitable as he is, and therefore still more

*Von Kremer.

exposed to complete prostration of the organs of feeling, exhibits this apathy in a yet more marked degree than the Arab and Egyptian. Many examples of this are found in old Arabic authors—*e.g.*, in the narratives of the martyrdoms of Hatyt, of Hellaj and of a young Mameluke crucified in 1247 A.D. Of the last Suyuti has preserved a psychologically detailed description.

Although Christian martyrology is rich in such instances of unshakable fortitude under the most painful tortures, yet in Islam the ecstatic temper has attained a higher significance and been more constantly exhibited. A chief reason of this was the religious fanaticism, which was incomparably stronger and more widely diffused in Islam than in mediæval Christendom. The minds of the Moslems were kept in perpetual tension by severe religious exercises, the effect of which was intensified by fasts and pilgrimages. The peculiar manner of life in the desert, the birthplace of Islam, also contributed to this; the scanty diet, the loneliness of the desert, and in the towns the want of civic life, the poverty of ideas among the Arabs, all helped to produce the same result. Finally, deception, hypocrisy, and superstition, as, alas, so often is the case in religious matters, played a great part. Whoever did not feel ecstatically moved at the recitation of the Koran pretended to be so, and often thereby, perhaps unconsciously, exercised a great effect on others. Men began by pretending to feel religious enthusiasm and ended by believing that they really felt it. Ghazzali mentions in the Ihya ululum that the prophet commanded that whoever did not feel moved to tears at the recitation of the Koran

should pretend to weep and to be deeply moved; for, adds Ghazzali sagely, in these matters one begins by forcing oneself to do what afterwards comes spontaneously. Moreover, the fact that religious excitement was looked upon as the mark of a fervent mind and devout intensity, vastly increased the number of those who claimed mystic illumination.

When verses of the Koran through frequent repetition lost their power to awaken ecstasy, single lines of fragments of poems sufficed to produce it. Once the mystic Taury found himself in the midst of a company who were discussing some scientific question. All took part in it with the exception of Taury, who suddenly rose and recited:—

Many cooing doves mourn in the mid-day heat,
Sadly under the roof of foliage overhead,
Remembering old companions and days gone by;
Their lament awakens my sorrow also,
My mourning rouses them, and often theirs disturbs my sleep;
I do not understand their cooing, and they do not understand my weeping:
But through my sorrow of heart I know them, and through their heart-sorrow they know me.

Hardly had those present heard these verses than they all fell into a state of ecstatic contemplation.

Ibrahim ben Adham, the celebrated Sufi, once heard the following verses:—

Everything is forgiven thee, except estrangement from Us:
We pardon thee all the past, and only that remains which has escaped Our eyes (*i.e.*, nothing).

They immediately caused him to fall into a trance which lasted twenty-four hours. Ghazzali, who himself borrowed much from the Sufis, and was a diligent

student of their doctrine, seeks to explain these strange phenomena on psychological grounds. He divides the ecstatic conditions which the hearing of poetical recitations produces into four classes. The first, which is the lowest, is that of the simple sensuous delight in melody. The second class is that of pleasure in the melody and of understanding the words in their apparent sense. The third class consists of those who apply the meaning of the words to the relations between man and God. To this class belongs the would-be initiate into Sufism ; he has necessarily a goal marked out for him to aim at, and this goal is the knowledge of God, meeting Him and union with Him by the way of secret contemplation, and the removal of the veil which conceals Him. In order to compass this aim the Sufi has a special path to follow ; he must perform various ascetic practices and overcome certain spiritual obstacles in doing so. Now when, during the recitation of poetry, the Sufi hears mention made of blame or praise, of acceptance or refusal, of union with the Beloved or separation from Him, of lament over a departed joy or longing for a look, as often occurs in Arabic poetry, one or the other of these accords with his spiritual state and acts upon him, like a spark on tinder, to set his heart aflame. Longing and love overpower him and unfold to him manifold vistas of spiritual experience.

The fourth and highest class is that of the fully initiated who have passed through the stages above-mentioned, and whose minds are closed to everything except God. Such an one is wholly denuded of self, so that he no longer knows his own experiences and

practices, and, as though with senses sealed, sinks into the ocean of the contemplation of God. This condition the Sufis characterise as self-annihilation (Fana).

But he who is bereft of self-consciousness is none the the less aware of what is without him; it is as if his consciousness were withdrawn from everything but the one object of contemplation, *i.e.*, God. While he who is completely absorbed in the contemplation of the object seen is as little capable of theorising regarding the act of contemplation as regarding the eye, the instrument of sight, or the heart, the seat of joyful emotion. Just in the same way a drunken man is not conscious of his intoxication, so he who is drowned in joy knows nothing of joy itself, but only knows what causes it. Such a condition of mind may occur with regard to created things as well as with regard to the Creator Himself, only in the latter case it is like a flash of lightning, without permanence. Could such a condition of the soul last longer, it would be beyond the power of human nature to endure and would end in overwhelming it. So it is related of Taury that once in a meeting he heard this verse recited:—

In my love to Thee I attained to a height where to tread causes the senses to reel.

He immediately fell into an ecstatic condition and ran into a field where the newly-cut stubble cut his feet like knives. Here he ran about all night till the morning, and a few days afterwards died.

In this highest condition of ecstasy the soul is to be compared to a clear mirror, which, itself colourless, reflects the colours of the object seen in it. Or to a

crystal, whose colour is that of the object on which it stands or of the fluid which it contains. Itself colourless, it has the property of transmitting colours. This exposition of Sufistic ecstasy by Ghazzali shows that in his time, far from being on the wane, such phenomena were on the increase. For when a man of such comprehensive mind, such a deep thinker, so well versed in the knowledge of men and especially of his fellow-Moslems, speaks so plainly and without doubt upon the matter and seeks to explain it psychologically, this idea must have already taken deep root and spread widely. Ghazzali is consequently to be regarded as a decided adherent of Sufism and as approving of the enthusiastic tendencies accompanying it. He narrates in his autobiography* how he left his family in Bagdad and went to Damascus, where for two whole years he studied Sufism. Afterwards he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. In his lonely musings things were revealed to him, which, he said, could not be described, and he arrived at last at the firm conviction that the Sufis were on the way of God and that their teaching was the best. It must be admitted that by Sufism Ghazzali meant that kind of it which held fast to the general principles of Islam and was in accord, even though only externally, with the orthodox party. These Sufis adhered to the Koran and the traditions, but interpreted them allegorically. Mysticism must always be propped up by a positive religion, as it has no support in itself.

* "The Confessions of Al Ghazzali" (Wisdom of the East series).

CHAPTER II

HASAN BASRI*
(D 728 A D)

HASAN Basri was born in Arabia at Medina, where his mother had been brought as a captive and sold to Omm Salma, one of the wives of the Prophet. Arrived at man's estate, and having received his liberty, he retired to Basra on the Persian gulf, a stronghold of the ascetic sect. Here he lived undisturbed, though his open disavowal of the reigning family of Ommeyah exposed him to some danger. The following incident, illustrating his independence of character is narrated by Ibn Khalliqan. When Omar ibn Hubaira was appointed to the government of Irak in the reign of the Caliph Abd-al Malik (A.D. 721) he called for Hasan Basri, Muhammad Ibn Sirin and as Shabi to whom he said, "Abd al Malik has received my promise that I will hear and obey him; and he has now appointed me to what you see, and I receive from him written orders. Must I obey him in whatever orders he takes upon himself to give?" To this Ibn Sirin and as Shabi gave a cautious reply, but Hasan Basri, being asked his opinion, made this answer: "O Ibn Hubaira! God outweighs Abd al Malik, and Abd al Malik cannot outweigh God; God can defend thee from Abd al

*These and the following eight sketches are taken from Attar's "Tazkirat-ul-auliya."

Malik, and Abd al Malik cannot defend thee from God. He will soon send an angel to take thee from thy throne, and send thee from the width of thy palace into the narrowness of the tomb. Then thy deeds alone can save thee." Ibn Hubaira then rewarded them, but bestowed a double reward on Hasan Basri, upon which as Shabi said to Ibn Sirin, " We gave him a poor answer, and he gave us a poor reward."

Hasan Basri's adoption of the ascetic life was brought about in the following way. When a young man he was a lapidary, and had gone to Roum (Asia Minor) to practise his craft. He there lived on friendly terms with the vizier of that country. One day the vizier said to him, " We are going out of the city to a certain place; will you come with us?" Hasan Basri assented, and went. " We came," he said afterwards, " to a plain where there was a vast tent the ropes of which were of silk and its stakes of gold. I saw a large number of soldiers marching round it; they repeated some words which I could not hear, and then retired. Then came about four hundred mullahs and learned men, who did the same. These were followed by a similar number of old men. Then about four or five hundred beautiful maidens, each holding in her hand a dish containing rubies, pearls, turquoises, and other precious stones. They went in procession round the tent in the same way. Finally the sultan and the vizier went into the tent and came out again.

" As for me, I remained transfixed with astonishment. ' What does all this mean? ' I asked the vizier. ' The King,' he said, ' had an extremely beautiful child of a happy disposition, who fell ill and died. His tomb

is within this tent, and they visit it once a year. First come the soldiers, who circle round the tent and say, 'O son of the sultan, if we could have ransomed thy life by the strokes of our swords, we would have done it, even had it cost us our own; but God willed otherwise, and we cannot change his decree.' Having so said, they go away. Then the mullahs and learned men, coming in their turn, say, 'O son of the sultan, if we could have ransomed thee by knowledge or by eloquence, we would have done so; but all the knowledge and eloquence in the world cannot arrest the decrees of Allah.' Then they depart. After them come the old men, who cry 'If we could have saved thee by groanings and prayers, we would have done so; but our intercession is useless.' Finally come the young maidens, who say, 'O son of the sultan, if we could have ransomed thee at the price of beauty and wealth, we would have done it; but the steps of fate turn aside for neither.' After them the sultan and the vizier enter the tent. The sultan says, 'O my son, I have done all that I could do. I have brought all these soldiers, these mullahs, these learned men, these old men, these beautiful maidens bearing treasures, and yet I cannot bring thee back. It depends not on me, but on Him before Whom all power is powerless. May the mercy of the Lord be multiplied upon thee for another year.' Having thus spoken, they return by the way they came.'"

Hasan Basri, having heard this, felt stirred to the depths of his heart. Leaving Roum, he retired to Basra, where he took an oath that he would not smile again till he knew what his eternal destiny would be.

He practised the severest asceticism, and many came to hear him preach.

Hasan Basri had a disciple who was in the habit of casting himself on the ground and uttering groans when he heard the Koran recited. "If thou art able to restrain these groans," said he, "they will prove like a destructive fire to thee; but if they are really beyond thy power to control, I declare that I am six stages behind thee in the way of piety. Such groanings," he added, "are generally the work of Satan."

One day Hasan Basri was preaching when Hejaj ben Yusuf, the bloodthirsty and formidable governor of Irak, accompanied by a great number of his retinue with drawn swords, entered the mosque. A person of distinction in the audience said, "We must watch to-day whether Hasan will be embarrassed by the presence of Hejaj." When the latter had taken his place, Hasan Basri, without paying the least attention to him, so far from shortening his discourse, prolonged it. When it was finished, the person who was watching him exclaimed, "Bravo, Hasan!" When he came down from the pulpit, Hejaj came forward, and, taking him by the hand, said, addressing the people, "If you wish to see him whom the Lord has distinguished among you, come and look on Hasan Basri."

Hasan had in his heart such a fear of the Lord that, like a man seated near an executioner, he was always in a state of apprehension. Seeing one day a man who wept, he asked him what was the matter. "To-day," answered the man, "I heard a preacher say that there were a great many among the Moslems who,

by reason of their sins would remain several years in hell, and then be taken out." "May God grant," cried Hasan, "that I be one of those who come out of hell at last; may I be even as that man, who, as the prophet of God said, will come out eighty-four years after all the rest."

One night he was overheard weeping and groaning in his house. "Why these tears and laments?" he was asked. "I weep," he answered, "thinking that perhaps to-day I have set my foot in an unlawful place, or allowed an evil word to escape my lips which will cause me to be chased from before the throne of the most high. 'Away!' it will be said to me; 'thou hast no access here, thy works of piety are not accepted.' And what answer shall I make? Behold the reason of my fear." One of his sayings was, "I never saw a certainty of which there is no doubt bear a greater resemblance to a doubtful thing of which there is no certainty than death does."

Hasan Basri had a neighbour named Shamaun, who was an infidel and a fire-worshipper. He fell ill, and his last hour approached. Some one said to Hasan, "Shamaun is your neighbour, and his last hour is come; why don't you go to see him?" Hasan having come to see him, saw that by reason of his assiduous fire-worship, his hair and beard were quite blackened by smoke. Hoping that he would become a Moslem, he said to him, "Come, Shamaun, fear the punishment which the Lord prepares for thee who hast passed thy life of seventy years in infidelity and fire-worship." "As for me," answered Shamaun, "I see on the part of you Moslems three characteristics

which I cannot explain, and which hinder me from becoming a Moslem :—(1) You never cease repeating that the world is perishable and impure, and yet day and night, without interval or repose, you heap up its treasures ; (2) You say that death is certain and inevitable, and yet you put the thought of it aside, and practise none of the works which should fit you for another world ; (3) You assert your belief that in that world it will be possible to contemplate the face of the Most High, and yet you commit acts which He abhors." " Thou speakest like one of the initiated," said Hasan, " but although the faithful commit sins, none the less they confess the unity and the existence of the Most High, whilst thou hast spent thy life in worshipping the fire. At the day of judgment, if they cast us both into hell, the fire will carry thee away at once, but if the grace of the Lord is accorded to me, it will not be able to scorch one of my eyebrows ; this shows that it is only a creature. And, moreover, you have worshipped it for seventy years, and I have never worshipped it."

These words made such an impression on Shamaun that he made a profession of the faith of Islam, dying soon afterwards. On the night of his death, Hasan in a dream saw Shamaun wearing a crown of gold, clothed in raiment of resplendent beauty, and walking in Paradise. " My God," he cried when he awoke, " Thou hast had mercy on him who spent seventy years in infidelity ; is it strange that Thou shouldest show mercy to the faithful ? "

Hasan was a man of such humility of mind that he considered everyone whom he saw his superior. One

day when he was walking along the bank of the river Tigris he saw a negro seated near a woman; before them was a jar and a cup. Each of them in turn poured from the jar into the cup and drank. Seeing this man, Hasan, according to his wont, said to himself, "There is a man better than myself." At the same time he secretly thought, "As regards the observance of the ceremonial law, it is possible that he is not superior to me, for he is sitting near a woman of doubtful character and drinking wine." While he was thus reflecting, there appeared on the river a boat heavily laden, and containing seven persons. Just as it was approaching the shore, it foundered. The negro, casting himself into the water, drew out six persons in succession; then, going to Hasan, he said to him, "Rise, if thou art better than I. I have saved six, for my part; thou save one, for thine." Then he added, "O true believers, this jar contains water, and this woman is my mother. I have wished to tempt Hasan." Then, addressing the latter, he said, "See, thou hast looked with the outer eye only, and hast not been capable of looking with the inner eye." At these words, Hasan, falling at his feet, kissed his hand, and understood that he was one of the Lord's chosen servants. "Sir," he said, "as thou hast drawn these drowning men from the water so save me from the abyss of self-worship." The negro replied, "Go, thou art saved." From that time Hasan considered no one smaller than himself, but everyone his superior."

On one occasion, Hasan Basri said, "I have been startled by the sayings of four persons, (1) a drunkard, (2) a debauchee, (3) a child, (4) a woman." "How was

that ? " he was asked. " One day," he said, " I saw a drunkard staggering in the midst of the mire. I said to him, ' Try and walk so as not to stumble.' ' O Hasan,' the drunkard replied, ' in spite of all your efforts, do *you* walk firmly in the way of God ? Tell me, yes or no. If I fall in the mire no great harm is done, I can get rid of it by washing ; but if you fall into the pit of self-conceit, you will never emerge clean and your eternal welfare will be entirely ruined.' These words pierced me to the heart. (2) Again, as I passed once close to a man of infamous character, I drew my robes close about me lest they should touch him. ' O Hasan,' he said, ' why draw thy robes away from contact with me. Only the Most High knows what will be the end of each.' (3) Another time I saw a child coming towards me holding a lighted torch in his hand. ' Where have you brought this light from ? ' I asked him. He immediately blew it out, and said to me, ' O Hasan, tell me where it is gone, and I will tell you whence I fetched it.' (4) One day a beautiful woman, with her face unveiled, came to me. She had just been quarrelling with her husband, and no sooner had she met me than she began reporting his words. ' O woman,' I said, ' first cover thy face and then speak.' ' O Hasan,' she answered, ' In my excitement I lost reason, and I did not even know that my face was uncovered. If you had not told me I should have gone thus into the bazaar. But you who with so great zeal cultivate the friendship of the Most High, ought you not to curb your eye, so as not to see whether my face was uncovered or not ? ' Her words sank deeply into my heart."

One day Hasan said to his friends, " You are like the companions of the prophet, on whom be peace." They felt immensely gratified at this, but he added, " I mean your faces and beards are like theirs, but nothing else in you. If you had seen them, such was their absorption in divine things, you would have thought them mad. Had they seen you, they would not have regarded one of you as a real Moslem. They, in the practice of the faith, were like horsemen mounted on swift steeds, or like the wind, or like the bird which cleaves the air ; while we progress like men mounted on donkeys with sores on their backs."

An Arab visiting Hasan Basri asked him for a definition of patience. Hasan answered, " There are two kinds of patience ; one kind consists in bearing afflictions and calamities bravely and in abstaining from what the Lord has forbidden, the other kind consists in never lending an ear to the suggestions of Satan." " As for me," said the Arab, " I have never seen anyone more retiring from the world and more patient than thyself." " Alas," answered Hasan, " my renouncement of the world and my patience count as nothing." " Why dost thou say so ? " exclaimed the Arab. " Because, if I practise renouncement it is only from dread of hell-fire, and if I keep patient it is only because I hope to enter Paradise. Now that man alone deserves to be taken into account who, without self-regarding motives practises patience for the sake of the Most High, and whose renouncement of the world has not Paradise for its object, but only the desire to please God. Such a way of acting is a manifest sign of sincerity of heart."

Asked on another occasion what his spiritual state was like, Hasan replied, "My state is like that of a man shipwrecked in the sea, who is clinging to a solitary plank."

He never laughed. At the moment of death he smiled once, and called out "What sin? What sin?" Someone saw him after his death in a dream, and asked him, "O Hasan Basri, thou who never wert in the habit of smiling, why, when dying, didst thou say with a smile, 'What sin? What sin?'" Hasan answered, "When I was dying I heard a voice which said, 'O Azrael, hold back his soul a little longer, it has still one sin,' and in my joy I exclaimed, 'What sin?'"

The night of his death another of his friends had a dream, in which he saw the gates of heaven open and heard a voice proclaim, "Hasan Basri has come to his Lord, Who is satisfied with him."

CHAPTER III

RABIA, THE WOMAN SUFI

RABIA, the daughter of Ismail, a woman celebrated for her holy life, and a native of Basra, belonged to the tribe of Adi. Al Qushairi says in his treatise on Sufism, "She used to say when holding converse with God, 'Consume with fire O God, a presumptuous heart which loveth Thee.' On one of these occasions a voice spoke to her and said, 'That we shall not do. Think not of us an ill thought.' Often in the silence of the night she would go on the roof of her house and say, 'The lover is now with his beloved, but I rejoice in being alone with Thee.'"

When Rabia grew up her father and mother died. At that time there was a famine in Basra. She came into the possession of an evil man, who sold her as a slave. The master who bought her treated her hardly, and exacted all kinds of menial services from her. One day, when she was seeking to avoid the rude gaze of a stranger, she slipped on the path and fell, breaking her wrist. Lying there with her face to the ground, she said "Lord, I am far from my own, a captive and an orphan, and my wrist has just been broken, and yet none of these things grieve me. Only this one thought causes me disquiet; it is that I know not if Thou art

satisfied with me." She then heard a voice, " Vex not thyself, O Rabia, for at the day of Resurrection We shall give thee such a rank that the angels nearest Us shall envy thee." Rabia went home with her heart at peace.

One night, Rabia's master being awake, heard the sound of her voice. He perceived Rabia with her head bent, saying, " My Lord, Thou knowest that the desire of my heart is to seek Thy approbation, and that its only wish is to obey Thy commands. If I had liberty of action, I would not remain a single instant without doing Thee service ; but Thou hast delivered me into the hands of a creature, and therefore I am hindered in the same." Her master said to himself that it was not possible any longer to treat her as a slave, and as soon as daybreak appeared, he said to her, " O Rabia, I make thee free. If thou desirest, remain here, and we shall be at thy service. If thou dost not wish to to stay here, go whithersoever it pleaseth thee."

Then Rabia departed from them and devoted herself entirely to works of piety. One day when she was making the pilgrimage to the Kaaba* she halted in the desert and exclaimed, " My God, my heart is a prey to perplexity in the midst of this solitude. I am a stone, and so is the Kaaba ; what can it do for me ? That which I need is to contemplate Thy face." At these words a voice came from the Most High, " O Rabia, wilt thou bear alone that which the whole world cannot ? When Moses desired to see Our Face we showed It to a mountain, which dissolved into a thousand fragments."

Abda, the servant maid of Rabia, relates as follows, " Rabia used to pass the whole night in prayer, and

*The sacred shrine at Mecca.

at morning dawn she took a light sleep in her oratory till daylight, and I have heard her say when she sprang in dread from her couch, 'O my soul, how long wilt thou sleep? Soon thou shalt sleep to rise no more, till the call shall summon thee on the day of resurrection.'"

Hasan Basri once asked Rabia if she ever thought of marrying. She answered, "The marriage contract can be entered into by those who have possession of their free-will. As for me, I have no will to dispose of; I belong to the Lord, and I rest in the shadow of His commandments, counting myself as nothing." "But," said Hasan, "how have you arrived at such a degree of piety?" "By annihilating myself completely."

Being asked on another occasion why she did not marry, she answered, "There are three things which cause me anxiety." "And what are they?" "One is to know whether at the moment of death I shall be able to take my faith with me intact. The second is whether in the Day of Resurrection the register of my actions will be placed in my right hand or not.* The third is to know, when some are led to Paradise and some to hell, in which direction I shall be led." "But," they cried, "none of us know any of these things." "What!" she answered, "when I have such objects to pre-occupy my mind, should I think of a husband?"

Someone asked her one day, "Whence comest thou?" "From the other world," was her reply. "And whither goest thou?" "Into the other world." "And what doest thou in this world." "I jest with it by eating its bread and doing the works of the other world in it." "O Rabia," said another to her, "dost

*A sign the person is acquitted.

thou love the Lord ? " " Truly," she replied, " I love Him." " And dost thou regard Satan as an enemy ? " " I love the Lord so much," she answered, " that I do not trouble myself about the enmity of Satan."

One night she saw the Prophet (on whom be peace) in a dream. He saluted her and said, " Rabia, lovest thou me ? " " O Prophet of God," she replied, " is there anyone who does not love thee ? Yet the love of the Most High fills my heart to such a degree that there is no room for love or hatred towards anyone else."

On one occasion she was asked, " Dost thou see Him Whom thou servest ? " " If I did not see Him," she said, " I would not serve Him." She was frequently found in tears, and, being asked the reason why, replied, " I fear that at the last moment a Voice may cry, ' Rabia is not worthy to appear in Our court.' " The following question was put to her, " If one of His servants truly repents, will the Lord accept it or not ? " " As long as God does not grant repentance," she replied, " how can anyone repent ? And if He does grant it, there is no doubt that he will accept it."

Once when Rabia had immured herself for a long while in her house without coming forth, her servant said to her, " Lady, come forth out of this house and contemplate the works of the Most High." " Nay," said Rabia, " enter rather into thyself and contemplate His work in thyself." Having kept a strict fast for seven days and nights in order to give herself to prayer, on the eighth night she seemed to hear her emaciated body say, " O Rabia, how long wilt thou torture me without mercy ? " Whilst she was holding this soliloquy

with herself, suddenly someone knocked at the door, and a man brought in some food in a bowl. Rabia took it and set it down ; then while she went to light the lamp, a cat came and ate the food. No sooner had Rabia returned and seen what had happened than she said to herself, " I will break my fast on water." As she went to draw water her lamp went out. She then uttered a deep sigh, and said, " Lord, why dost thou make me wretched ? " Whereupon she heard a voice saying, " O Rabia, if thou desirest it, I will give thee the whole world for thine own ; but I shall have to take away the love which thou hast for Me from thy heart, for the love of Me and of the world cannot exist together." " Hearing myself thus addressed," said Rabia, " I entirely expelled from my heart the love of earthly things, and resolutely turned my gaze away from them. For thirty years I have not prayed without saying to myself, ' This prayer, perhaps, is the last which I shall pray,' and I have never been tired of saying, ' My God, let me be so absorbed in Thy love that no other affection may find room in my heart.' "

One day some men of learning and piety came to her and said, " The Most High has crowned His chosen saints with the gift of performing miracles, but such privileges have never been granted to a woman. How didst thou attain to such a high degree ? " " What you say is true," she answered, " but, on the other hand, women have never been so infatuated with themselves as men, nor have they ever claimed divinity."

Hasan Basri relates, " One day when I had been to Rabia who had fallen sick, to ask after her, I saw seated at her gate a merchant who wept. ' Why are you

weeping?' I asked him. 'I have just brought for Rabia,' he answered, 'this purse of gold, and I am troubled in mind, not knowing whether she will accept it or not. Go in Hasan, and ask whether she will.' Then I went in, and no sooner had I reported to her the words of this merchant than she said to me, 'Thou knowest well, O Hasan, that the Most High gives daily bread even to those who do not worship Him; how then will He not give it to those whose hearts are aglow with love to Him? Besides, ever since I have known God, I have turned my eyes away from all except Him. How can I accept anyone's money when I know not whether it has been gained by lawful or unlawful means? Present then my excuses to this merchant, and let him go.'"

Another merchant visiting Rabia found her house in ill repair. He presented her with a new house. Rabia had no sooner entered it than, seeing paintings on the wall, she became absorbed in contemplating them. Recovering herself, she quitted the house, and refused to re-enter it, saying, "I fear lest my heart may become attached to this house to such a degree that I neglect preparation for the other world."

One day Abdul Wahid and Sofiân Tsavri went to see Rabia in her illness. They were so touched by the sight of her weakness that for some moments they could not speak a word. At last Sofiân said, "O Rabia, pray that the Lord may lighten thy sufferings." "O Sofiân," she answered, "who has sent me these sufferings?" "The Most High," he said. "Very well," she replied, "if it is his will that this trial come upon me, how can I, ignoring His will, ask Him to remove it?" "Rabia,"

said Sofiân, " I am not capable of talking to thee about thy own affairs ; talk to me about mine." " Well," answered Rabia, " if thou hadst not an inclination to this low world, thou wouldst be a man without fault." " Then," relates Sofiân, " I cried with tears, ' My God, canst Thou be satisfied with me ? ' " " O Sofiân," said Rabia, " dost thou not blush at saying to the Lord, ' Canst Thou be satisfied with me ? ' without having done a single thing to please him ? "

Malik Dinar recounts the following : " I went to see Rabia, and found her drinking water out of a broken pitcher. She was lying stretched on an old mat, with a brick for her pillow. I was pierced to the heart at the sight, and said, " O Rabia, I have rich friends ; if you will let me, I will go and ask them for something for you." " You have spoken ill, Malik," she replied ; " it is the Lord who, to them as to me, gives daily bread. He Who provides for the needs of the rich, shall He not provide for the necessities of the poor ? If He wills that it should be thus with us, we shall gladly submit to His will.' "

On one occasion when Malik Dinar, Hasan Basri and Shaqiq were with her, the conversation turned on sincerity of heart towards God. Hasan Basri said, " He has not sincere love to God who does not bear with constancy the afflictions which the Lord sends him." " That remark savours of self-conceit," said Rabia. Shaqiq observed, " He is not sincere who does not render thanks for afflictions." " There is a higher degree of sincerity than that," said Rabia. Malik Dinar suggested, " He is not sincere who does not find delight in the afflictions which the Lord sends." " That

is not the purest sincerity," she remarked. Then they asked her to define sincerity. She said, " He is not sincere who does not forget the pain of affliction through his absorption in God."

One of the learned theologians of Basra, once visiting Rabia, began to enlarge upon the defects of the world. " You must be very fond of the world," said Rabia, " for if you were not, you would not talk so much about it. He who really intends to buy something keeps on discussing it. If you were really disentangled from it, what would you care about its merits or its faults ? "

Other sayings of Rabia were these, " My God, if on the day of judgment Thou sendest me to hell, I shall reveal a secret which will make hell fly far from me." " O Lord, give all Thou destinest for me of the goods of this world to Thy enemies, and all that Thou reservest for me in Paradise to Thy friends, for it is Thou only Whom I seek." " My God, if it is from fear of hell that I serve Thee, condemn me to burn in hell ; and if is is for the hope of Paradise, forbid me entrance there ; but if it is for Thy sake only, deny me not the sight of Thy face."

Rabia died A.D. 752, and was buried near Jerusalem. Her tomb was a centre of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER IV

IBRAHIM BEN ADHAM PRINCE OF BALKH (D 875)

IBRAHIM BEN Adham was originally Prince of the city of Balkh, and had control of the riches of many provinces. One night when he was in bed he heard a sound of footsteps on the roof of his palace. "Who are you on the roof?" he cried out. An answer came, "I have lost a camel, and I am looking for it on this roof." "Well," he said, "you must be a fool for your pains, to look for a camel on a roof." "And thou, witless man," returned the voice, "is it while seated on a throne of gold that thou expectest to find the Most High? That is far madder than to seek a camel on a roof." At these words, fear seized the heart of Ibrahim, who spent the rest of the night in prayer, till the early dawn. The next morning he took his seat upon his throne, round which were ranged all the grandees of his kingdom and his guards, according to their rank, in the usual manner. All of a sudden Ibrahim perceived in the midst of the crowd a majestic figure, who advanced towards him unseen by the rest. When he had come near, Ibrahim asked him, "Who art thou, and what hast thou come to seek here?" "I am a stranger," he answered, "and I wish to stay at this inn." "But this is not an inn," answered Ibrahim, "it is my own house." "To whom did it

belong before thee ? " inquired the stranger. " To my father." " And before thy father, to whom did it belong ? " " To my grandfather." " And where are thy ancestors now ? " " They are dead." " Well then, is this house anything but an hotel, where the coming guest succeeds to the departing one ? " So saying, the stranger began to withdraw. Ibrahim rose, ran toward him, and said, " I adjure thee to stop, in the name of the Most High." The stranger paused. " Who art thou," cried Ibrahim, " who hast lit this fire in my soul ? " " I am Khizr, O Ibrahim. It is time for thee to awake." So saying, he disappeared. Ibrahim, pierced with sorrow, awoke from his trance, and felt a keen disdain for all earthly grandeur.

The next morning, being mounted and going to the chase, he heard a voice which said, " O Ibrahim, thou wast not created for this." He looked round him on all sides, but could see no one, and went on again. Presently again the voice was heard, proceeding, as it were, from his saddle, " O Ibrahim, thou wast not created for this." Struck to the heart, Ibrahim exclaimed, " It is the Lord who commands ; His servant will obey." He thereupon dismounted, exchanged clothes with a shepherd whom he discovered close by, and began to lead the life of a wandering dervish, and became famous for his devoutness and austerity.

After some years, he undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca, and joined a caravan which was bound thither. The news of his coming having reached the chief men of the city, they all came out to meet him. Some of their servants, going on, met Ibrahim (whom, of course, they did not know), and asked him if Ibrahim ben

Adham was approaching. "Why do you ask me?" he said. "Because the chief men of the city are come out to meet him." "And why make so much ado about that man," he said, "who is a sinner and an infidel?" "What right hast thou to speak thus of him?" they cried; and, seizing him, handled him roughly. After having beaten him they went on their way. Ibrahim said to himself, "Thou hast had thy deserts." When he was recognised afterwards, an ample apology was made to him, and he was conducted to Mecca, where he remained several years, supporting himself by money earned by his daily toil.

When Ibrahim left Balkh, he had a son who was then a child. When the latter became a young man, he asked, "Where is my father?" Whereupon his mother told him all that had occurred to his father. "Well," said the youth, "where is he to be found now?" "At Mecca," his mother answered. "Very well, I will go to Mecca," he replied, "and find my father." He set out, and when he arrived there, he found in the sacred precinct surrounding the Kaaba many fakirs clothed with rags. "Do you know Ibrahim ben Adham?" he asked them. "He is one of ourselves," one of them answered; "he has gone to gather and sell wood wherewith to buy bread and bring it us." The younger Ibrahim immediately went out of the city to seek his father. Presently he found an old man carrying a bundle of wood on his head, whom he recognised as his father. At this sight he was near weeping, but controlled himself, and walked behind him unobserved.

As for Ibrahim ben Adham, he carried his wood to the bazaar, sold it, and bought bread, which he took

to his fellow-fakirs, and then performed his devotions. On the other hand, his son did not disclose himself, for he feared that to do so suddenly would cause his father to fly.

The next morning one of Ibrahim ben Adham's fellow-fakirs rose and went to his son's tent. He found the young man reading the Koran and weeping. The fakir advanced and saluted him, asking, "Who art thou? Whence comest thou? Whose son art thou?" "I am the son of Ibrahim ben Adham," replied the young man, "and I was never able to see my father until now; but I fear that if I make myself known to him, he will repulse me brusquely and flee away." "Come," said the fakir, "I will myself lead you to him."

Without further delay the wife and son of Ibrahim joined the fakir, and went to seek him. No sooner had his wife perceived him than she uttered a cry and said, "My son, behold thy father." All the bystanders burst into tears, while Ibrahim's son fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself he saluted his father, who returned his greeting, embraced him, and said, "O my son, of what religion art thou?" "Of the religion of Muhammad," he answered. "God be praised!" exclaimed Ibrahim. Then he asked, "Dost thou know the Koran?" "I know it," was the reply. "Dost thou read the books which treat of religious knowledge?" "I read them." "God be praised!" again exclaimed Ibrahim. Then he prepared to leave them and depart, but his wife and son would not let him, and began to weep. But Ibrahim, lifting up his eyes to heaven, prayed, "My God, come to my help," on which his son immediately died. The companions

of Ibrahim asked him, " What is the meaning of this ? " " When I saw my son," he answered, " my paternal tenderness was aroused. But immediately I heard a voice, ' What, Ibrahim ! Dost thou pretend attachment to Us while all the while thy heart is engaged with another person ? How can two loves co-exist in one heart ? ' On hearing this, I prayed to the Lord and said, ' O my God, if my love to this child makes Thee withdraw from me, take his soul or mine.' My prayer was heard, and He has taken the soul of my son." On one occasion Ibrahim is reported to have said, " Many nights in succession I sought to find the Kaaba unoccupied. One night when it was raining very hard, I at last found it so. I entered it, and lifting my heart to God, I said, ' O God, blot out my sins,' upon which I heard a Voice, which said, ' O Ibrahim, all over the world men ask Us the same thing ; but if We blot out everyone's sins, whom shall We cause to share in the ocean of Our mercy ? ' " On another occasion he was asked, " Why hast thou given up thy rank and thy kingdom ? " " One day," he said, " When I was seated on my throne, I looked at a mirror. I saw reflected in it my last resting-place, which was an obscure tomb, wherein I had no one to keep me company. The road whereby to reach the other world was long, nay infinite, and I had no provision for the way. I saw besides an upright judge, who questioned me so rigorously that I could return him no fit answer. Behold why my rank and my kingdom lost all value in my eyes, and why I abandoned them." " But why," continued the questioner, " didst thou flee Khorasan ? " " Because," he said, " they kept

on questioning me." "And why dost thou not marry?" "Is there any woman who would marry a man like myself, who am always hungry and naked? If I could, I would divorce myself; how then can I attach anyone to myself?"

Once Ibrahim asked a dervish, "Have you a wife and children?" "No," answered the dervish. "It is all then well for thee." "Why so?" asked the dervish. "Because," said Ibrahim, "everytime a dervish marries he is like one who embarks on a vessel, but when children are born to him he is like one who is drowning."

Seeing a dervish groaning, he said, "Doubtless thou hast bought this position of dervish at a low price." "What, Ibrahim," answered the other, "can the position of dervish be bought?" "Certainly," answered Ibrahim; "I have bought it at the price of royalty, and I find I have made a good bargain."

One day a man brought to Ibrahim a sum of a thousand pieces of gold, which he had vowed to offer him. "I do not take anything from the wretched," the latter said. "But," said the other, "I am a rich man." "What," answered Ibrahim, "you are as rich as that, and still seek to increase your wealth?" "As a matter of fact, I do." "Well then, you are more wretched than anyone," and he added, "Listen! I possess nothing, and I ask nothing of anyone. I have aspired after the condition of a dervish and found riches in it; others have aspired after riches and found poverty." Another person also offered Ibrahim a thousand pieces of gold, which he refused, saying, "You wish doubtless by means of this gold to erase my name from the list of dervishes."

Every day Ibrahim worked for hire, and whatever he earned he spent on provisions to take to his companions; then they all broke their fast together. He never returned in any case till he had performed his evening devotions. One day when he had been absorbed in them, he returned later than usual. His companions, who were waiting for him, said to themselves, "We had better break our fast and all go to bed. When Ibrahim sees what we have done, he will come earlier another time, and not keep us waiting." Accordingly, they all ate and lay down. When Ibrahim came and saw them asleep, he said to himself, "Perhaps they have gone to bed hungry." He had brought with him a little meal, which he made into dough; then he blew up the fire, and cooked supper for his companions. They then rose and said to him, "What are you doing, Ibrahim?" "I am cooking something for you, for it has occurred to me that perhaps you have gone to bed without taking anything." They looked at each other, and said, "See, while we were plotting against him, he was engaged in thinking for us."

One day a man came to Ibrahim and said, "O Ibrahim, I have done myself a great deal of harm (by sin). Give me some advice." "Listen then," said Ibrahim, "here are six rules for you. First: When you have committed a sin, do not eat the food which the Lord sends you." "But I cannot live without food," said the other. "What!" exclaimed Ibrahim, "is it just that you should profit by what the Lord supplies while you do not serve Him and never cease to offend Him?" Second: "When you are on the point of committing a sin, quit the Kingdom of the

Most High." "But," said the man," His Kingdom extends from the East to the West; how can I go out of it?" "Very well, remain in it; but give up sin, and don't be rebellious." Third: "When you are about to sin, place thyself where the Most High cannot see you." "But one cannot hide anything from Him." "Very well then," said Ibrahim, "is it right that you should live on what He supplies, and that you should dwell in His Kingdom, and commit evil actions under His eyes?" Fourth: "When Azrael, the Angel of Death, comes to claim your soul, say to him, 'Give me a respite, I wish to repent.'" "But how will Azrael listen to such a prayer?" "If it is so," replied Ibrahim, "repent now, so as not to have to do so when Azrael comes." Fifth: "When you are placed in the tomb, dismiss the angels Munkir and Nakir,* who will come to examine thee." "But I cannot." "Very well, live such a life as to be able to reply satisfactorily to them." Sixth: "On the Day of Judgment, when the order goes forth to conduct sinners to hell, say you won't go." "It suffices, Ibrahim, you have said enough." The man repented, and the fervour of his conversion lasted till his death.

Ibrahim is said to have told the following story. "One day I went to glean, but as soon as I put any ears of corn in the lappet of my robe they were shaken out. This happened something like forty times. At last I cried, 'What does this mean, O Lord?' I heard a Voice say in reply, 'O, Ibrahim, in the time of your prosperity forty bucklers of red gold were carried in

*According to the Mahommadan belief every man as soon as he is buried is examined by these two angels.

front of thee. It was necessary that you should be thus molested as a requital for the luxury of those forty golden bucklers.' "

Once Ibrahim was entrusted with the charge of an orchard. The owner one day came down to visit it, and told Ibrahim to bring him some sweet pomegranates. Ibrahim went and gathered the largest he could find, but they all proved to be bitter. " What ! " said the owner, " you have eaten these pomegranates so long, and cannot distinguish the sweet from the bitter ? " " Sir," replied Ibrahim, " you told me to take charge of the orchard, but you did not tell me to eat the pomegranates." " Ah," replied the other, " to judge by your austerity, you must be no other than Ibrahim ben Adham." The latter, seeing that he was discovered, left the orchard and departed.

A story told by Ibrahim was as follows. " One night I saw in a dream Gabriel, with a piece of paper in his hand. ' What are you doing ? ' I asked him. ' I am writing on this sheet of paper the names of the friends of the Lord.' ' Will you write mine among them ? ' Ibrahim asked. ' But you are not one of His friends.' ' If I am not one of His friends, at least I am a friend of His friends.' Immediately a Voice was heard, ' O Gabriel, write Ibrahim's name on the first line, for he who loves Our friends is Our friend."*

*Leigh Hunt's well known poem refers to this :

" Abou ben Adhem (may his tribe increase !) "
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,

Once while Ibrahim was walking in the country, a horseman met him and asked him who he was. "I am," answered Ibrahim, "the servant of the Most High." "Well," said the horseman, "direct me to the nearest dwellings." Ibrahim pointed to the cemetery. "You are jesting at me," the other cried, and struck him on the head so severely that the blood began to flow. Then he tied a cord round his neck, and dragged him forcibly into the middle of the neighbouring town. The people cried out "Madman, what are you doing? It is Ibrahim ben Adham." Immediately the horseman prostrated himself before Ibrahim and implored his pardon. "O Ibrahim," he said, "when I asked you where were the nearest dwellings, why did you point to the cemetery?" "Every day," he answered, "the cemetery becomes more and more peopled, while the town and its most flourishing quarters are continually falling into ruins."

When Ibrahim's last hour arrived, he disappeared from sight, and no one has been able to say exactly where his tomb is. Some say it is at Bagdad, others at Damascus, others at Pentapolis. When he died, a Voice was heard saying, "The man who excelled all others in faith is dead; Ibrahim ben Adham has passed away."

And to the presence in the room he said:
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,
And with a look made all of sweet accord,
Answered "The names of those who love the Lord,"
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay not so,"
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low
But cheerily still; and said: "I pray thee then
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."
The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
He came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

CHAPTER V

FUDHAYL BEN AYAZ, THE HIGHWAYMAN
(D 803 A D)

In the beginning of his career Fudhayl ben Ayaz was a highwayman, and used to pitch his tent on the plains between Merv and Abiwerd. He had collected many other robbers round him; when they brought in booty, he, as their chief, apportioned it. He never neglected saying the Friday prayers, and dismissed any of his servants whom he found neglecting them.

One day his men were lying in wait on the high road when a numerous caravan arrived and fell into their clutches. In this caravan was a merchant who had a large sum of money in his purse. Desirous of hiding it, he fled towards the open plain; there he found a tent and a man clothed in coarse garments seated in it. The merchant, having explained the matter to him, was told to leave his money there. He did so, and returned to the caravan. When he got there he saw that the robbers had attacked it and taken all the goods, after having bound and laid on the earth all the travellers. He ransomed them, and helped them to gather together the remains of their property. When he returned to the tent he found the robbers there dividing their booty. Seeing this, he said, "Woe is me! Then he whom I trusted my money to was a robber." He was on the point of departing when Fudhayl called out to him, "What is the matter?" "I had come,"

he answered, "to take back my money which I had deposited here." "Well," said Fudhayl, "you will find it where you placed it." The merchant did so. "But," cried Fudhayl's companions, "we did not find any coined money at all in this caravan; how is it that you hand over such a large sum?" "This man," answered Fudhayl, "has trusted me in the simplicity of his heart; now I, in the simplicity of my heart, trust in the Lord; and just as I have justified the good opinion which the merchant had of me, I hope the Lord will justify that which I have of Him."

The conversion of Fudhayl to an ascetic life took place in the following manner. As he was climbing over a wall to see a girl whom he loved, he heard a voice pronounce this verse of the Koran: "Is not the time yet come unto those who believe that their hearts should humbly submit to the admonition of God?"* On this he exclaimed, "O Lord, that time is come." He then went away from the place, and the approach of night induced him to repair for shelter to a ruined edifice. A caravan was encamped not far off, and Fudhayl heard one of the travellers say to another, "We must rise and be going, lest Fudhayl should arrive and rob us." Fudhayl then came forward and said, "I have good news for you. Fudhayl has entered upon the path of penitence, and is more likely to flee from you than you from him." Then he departed, after having asked their pardon for his former misdeeds. For some time he resided at Mecca, where he received instruction from Abou Hanifeh, and subsequently returned to his own country, where his sanctity became widespread.

*Koran. Sura 57, v 15.

It is related that one night the Caliph Harun-al-Rashid said to Fazl the Barmecide, " Take me to a man by whose aid I may rise out of the moral torpor into which I have fallen." Fazl took him to the door of a celebrated ascetic, Sofyan ibn Oyaina, who asked on their knocking, " Who is there ? " " The Prince of the Faithful," answered Fazl. " Why did you not send for me ? " said Sofyan, " I would have come myself in person to serve him." Al-Rashid, hearing this, said, " This is not the man I seek." They then departed, and knocked at the door of Fudhayl. As they arrived, the latter was reciting the following verse of the Koran : " Do those who have done evil imagine that we shall set them on the same level with those who have done well ? " Koran (Sura xlv., v. 20). The Caliph had no sooner heard this verse than he said, " If it is good advice we are seeking, here is enough for us." Then they knocked at the door. " Who is there ? " asked Fudhayl. " The Prince of the Faithful," Fazl answered. " What do you want ? " was the reply ; " I have nothing to do with you, leave me alone and don't waste my time." " But you should treat the Caliph with honour, and let us in." " It is for you to come in if you must, in spite of me," answered Fudhayl. When the Caliph and his attendant entered, Fudhayl extinguished the lamp in order not to see the intruders. Harun-al-Rashid, having touched Fudhayl's hand in the dark, the latter exclaimed, " How soft this hand is ; may it escape hell fire." Having thus spoken, he rose to pray. As for the Caliph, he began to weep, and said, " Speak to me at least one word." Fudhayl, when he had finished his prayers, said to him, " O Harun,

thy ancestor Abbas, who was the paternal uncle of the Prophet (on whom be peace!) said to him one day, O Prophet of God, make me ruler over a nation. The Prophet replied, I have made thee ruler over thyself. If thou rulest thine own body and keepest it constant in the service of the Lord, that is better than ruling a nation for a thousand years. Again, Omar, the son of Abd al Aziz, being installed on the throne of the Caliphate, sent for three of his intimate friends, and said to them, 'Behold me caught in the toils of the Caliphate; how shall I get rid of them? Many people consider power a blessing; I regard it as a calamity.'"

Then Fudhayl added, "O Harun, if thou wishest to escape the punishment of the Day of Judgment, regard each old man among the Moslems as thy father, the young men as thy brothers, the women as thy sisters. O Harun, I fear lest thy handsome visage be scorched by the flames of hell. Fear the Most High, and know that He will interrogate thee on the Day of Resurrection." At these words, Harun-al-Rashid wept copiously. Then Fazl said to Fudhayl, "Say no more; you have killed the Caliph with grief." "Oh Haman!"* Fudhayl answered, "it is not I, it is thou and thy relations who have misled the Caliph and destroyed him." Hearing these words, Harun-al-Rashid wept still more bitterly, and said to Fazl, "Be silent! If he has called you Haman, he has (tacitly) compared me to Pharaoh." Then, addressing Fudhayl, he asked him, "Have you any debt to pay?" "Yes," he answered, "that of the service which I

*According to the Koran, Haman was the vizier of Pharaoh whom he misled by bad advice.

owe to the Most High. He furnishes me with subsistence, I have no need to borrow." Then Harun-al-Rashid placed in Fudhayl's hand a purse in which were a thousand pieces of gold, saying, "This money is lawfully acquired, I have inherited it from my mother." "Ah!" exclaimed Fudhayl, "my advice has been wasted; my object in giving it was to lighten thy burden; thou seekest to make mine more heavy." At these words, Harun-al-Rashid rose, saluted him, and departed. All the way home he kept repeating to himself, "This Fudhayl is a great teacher." On another occasion the Caliph is reported to have said to Fudhayl, "How great is thy self-abnegation," to which Fudhayl made answer, "Thine is greater." "How so?" said the Caliph. "Because I make abnegation of this world, and thou makest abnegation of the next; now this world is transitory, and the next will endure for ever."

Sofian Tsavri relates the following anecdote. "One night I was talking with Fudhayl, and after we had been conversing on all kinds of subjects, I said to him, 'What a pleasant evening we have had, and what interesting conversation.' 'No,' he said, 'neither the evening nor the conversation have been good.' 'Why so?' I remarked. 'Because,' he said, 'you sought to speak words which might please me, and I sought to answer so as to gratify you. Both of us, pre-occupied with our talk, had forgotten the Most High. It would be better for each of us to sit still in his place and to lift up his heart towards God.'"

A stranger coming to Fudhayl one day was asked by the latter for what purpose he came. "I have

come," he answered, " to talk with you, and to find in so doing calm of mind," " That is to say," broke in Fudhayl, " you wish to mislead me with lies, and desire me to do the same to you. Be off about your business."

*But with all his austerity of life, his prolonged fasts and watchings, his ragged dress and wearisome pilgrimages, he preferred the practice of interior virtue and purity of intention to all outward observances, and used often to say that " he who is modest and compliant to others and lives in meekness and patience gains a higher reward by so doing than if he fasted all his days and watched in prayer all his nights." At so high a price did he place obedience to a spiritual guide, and so necessary did he deem it, that he declared, " Had I a promise of whatever I should ask in prayer, yet would I not offer that prayer save in union with a superior."

But his favourite virtue was the love of God in perfect conformity to His will above all hope or fear. Thus, when his only son (whose virtues resembled his father's) died in early age, Fudhayl was seen with a countenance of unusual cheerfulness, and, being asked by his intimate disciple, Abou Ali, the reason wherefore, he answered, " It was God's good pleasure, and it is therefore my good pleasure also."

Others of his sayings are the following: " To leave aught undone for the esteem of men is hypocrisy, and to do ought for their esteem is idolatry." " Much is he beguiled who serves God for fear or hope, for His true service is for mere love." " I serve God because I cannot help serving Him for very love's sake."

*Vide Palgrave: " Asceticism among Mohammedan nations."

CHAPTER VI

BAYAZID BASTAMI
(D 874 A D)

BAYAZID BASTAMI, whose grandfather was a Zoroastrian converted to Islam, was distinguished for his piety while still a child. His mother used to send him regularly to the mosque to read the Koran with a mullah. When he reached the chapter "Luqman," he read the verse, "Show thy gratitude in serving Me, and show thy gratitude to thy parents in serving them." He asked his teacher the meaning of the verse, and had no sooner heard it explained than he immediately ran home. When she saw him, his mother said, "Why have you come home so early, my child? Have they sent you for the fees?" "Mother," answered Bayezid, "I have just read the verse in which the Lord commands me to serve Him, and to serve thee; but, as I cannot serve in two places at once, I have come to propose to you that you should ask the Lord to give me to you in order that I may serve you, or that you should yourself give me to the Lord that I may serve Him." "Since that is the case," said his mother, "I give you up to the Lord, and renounce all my rights over you." Accordingly, a few years afterwards, Bayazid left his native village Bastam, and for thirty years lived as a bare-footed ascetic in the deserts of Syria. Once

during this time Bayazid came home and listened at the door of his mother's house before going in. He heard her saying in prayer, "May God bless my poor exile, may the hearts of the pious be rejoiced by him and accord him grace." Bayazid, hearing these words, wept, and knocked at the door. "Who is there?" she asked. "Thy exile," he answered. No sooner had she opened the door than, embracing Bayazid, she said to him, weeping, "O my son, separated from thee as I have been, my eyes have lost the power to see, and my back is bent," and they both mingled their tears together.

Some time after Bayazid said to a friend, "What I ought to have known most clearly is just what I have only learnt when too late—to serve my mother. That which I sought in devoting myself to so many religious exercises, in putting myself at the service of others, and in exiling myself far from my kindred and my country, see, how I have discovered it. One night when my mother asked for water, as there was none in the pitcher, I went to the canal to draw some. It was a winter night, and the frost was very sharp. While I had gone for the water, my mother had fallen asleep again. I stood waiting with the full pitcher in my hand till she should awake. When she did so, she asked for water, but when I wished to give it her, I found that the water was frozen, and the handle of the jug stuck fast to my hand. 'Why,' said my mother, 'did you not put it down?' 'Because I feared,' I answered, 'not to be ready when you asked for it.' That same night the Lord revealed to me all that I wanted to know."

Bayazid used to tell the following story. "A man came to see me, and asked where I was going. 'I am going to Mecca,' I said, 'to make the circuit of the Kaaba.'* 'How much money hast thou?' he asked. 'Two hundred pieces of gold,' I answered. 'Very well,' he said, 'give them me and walk seven times round me. By this act of charity thou wilt deserve a greater recompense than thou wouldest obtain at the Kaaba.'† I did as he asked, and that year I did not make the pilgrimage."

One day the thought crossed Bayazid's mind that he was the greatest Sufi of the age. But no sooner had it done so, than he understood it was an aberration on his part. "I rose immediately," he said, "and went some way into the desert of Khorassan, where I sat down. I took then the resolution of not moving from the spot where I was seated till the Lord should send me someone who would make me see myself as I really was. I waited thus for three days and three nights. On the fourth night a rider on a camel approached. I perceived on his countenance the marks of a penetrating mind. He halted, and, fixing his eyes on me, said, 'Thou desirest doubtless, that in the twinkling of an eye I should cause to be swallowed up the village of Bastam and all its population, together with its riches, and Bayazid himself.' At these words I was seized with an indescribable fear, and asked him, 'Whence comest thou?' 'O Bayazid,' he answered, 'while thou hast been seated here I have travelled

*Pilgrims at Mecca go round the Kaaba seven times.

†An allusion to the mystics' doctrine that man himself is the true Kaaba or House of God.

three thousand miles. Take care, O Bayazid, to place a curb on thy heart, and not to forget the road ; else shalt thou infallibly perish.' Then he turned his back and departed."

One night Bayazid, having gone out of his house, went to the burial-ground to perform his devotions. There he found a young man playing a guitar, who came towards him. Bayazid, considering music unlawful, exclaimed, " There is no might or power except in God."* The young man, irritated, struck the head of Bayazid with his guitar, breaking it, and wounding him. Bayazid returned home. The next morning very early he placed some sweetmeats and some pieces of gold in a dish and sent it to the young man, charging the messenger to say from him, " Last night you broke your guitar by striking my head with it ; take, therefore, this money, buy another guitar, and eat the sweetmeats so that there may remain no rancour in your heart." When he had received the message, the young man came in tears to Bayazid, asked his pardon, and repented.

On another occasion, Bayezid was saying his prayers in company with a friend. When they had finished their devotions, his friend said to him, " Tell me, Bayazid, you do not ask anything of anyone, you do not engage in any industry ; whence do you get your provision ? " " Wait a little," said Bayazid, " I am going to say my prayers again." " Why ? " " Because it is unlawful to pray with a man who does not know Who is the Bestower of daily bread."

*A formula used by devout Mussalmen at the sight of anything evil.

Hatim Assam used to say to his disciples, " If, on the Day of Judgment you do not intercede for those who will be conducted to hell, you are not my disciples." Bayazid, having heard this, said in his turn, " Those only are my disciples who, on the Day of Judgment, will stand on the brink of hell, in order to seize and save the wretches cast down thither, even were it necessary to enter hell themselves for the salvation of the others."

Bayazid related as follows. " One day I heard a Voice, which said, ' O Bayazid, our treasure-house is brimmed full with acts of adoration and devotion offered by men ; bring Us something which is not in Our treasury.' ' But, O God,' I cried, ' what then shall I bring ? ' And the voice answered me, ' Bring Me sorrow of heart, humility, contrition.' "

Another time he said, " After having endured the rigours of asceticism for forty years, one night I found myself before the doors and curtains which hide the throne of God. ' For pity's sake,' I exclaimed, groaning, ' let me pass.' ' O Bayazid,' cried a Voice, ' you still possess a pitcher and an old cloak ; you cannot pass.' Then I cast away the pitcher and the cloak, and I heard the Voice again address me, ' O Bayazid, go and say to those who do not know : " Behold, for forty years I have practised rigorous asceticism. Well, till I cast away my broken pitcher and torn cloak, I could not find access to God ; and you, who are entangled in the ties of worldly interests, how shall you discover the way to Him ? " ' "

One night, after having said his evening prayer, Bayazid remained standing till the morning, and

shedding tears. When morning came, his servant asked him, "What has happened to you to-night?" "Methought I had arrived at the throne of God," replied Bayazid, and I said to it, 'O Throne, we are taught that the Lord rests on thee.' 'O Bayazid,' replied the throne, 'it is said here that the Lord dwells in a humble heart; but where is the intelligence capable of penetrating this mystery? Heavenly beings question earthly ones concerning it, and they only cast the question back.'"

Bayazid said once, "When I had arrived at the station of Proximity, I heard a Voice say to me, 'O Bayazid, ask what thou hast to ask.' 'My God,' I answered, 'Thou art the Object of my desire.' 'O Bayazid,' the Voice replied, 'if there lingers in thee an atom of earthly desire, and till thou art reduced to nothing in the station of Annihilation, thou canst not find Me.' 'My God,' I answered, 'I shall not return from Thy Court empty-handed; I wish to ask something from Thee.' 'Very well, ask it.' 'Grant me mercy for all men.' The Voice said, 'O Bayazid lift up thine eyes.' I lifted them, and I saw that the Most High was far more inclined to have mercy on His servants than I. 'Lord,' I cried, 'have mercy on Satan.' 'O Bayazid,' the Voice answered, 'Satan is made of fire, and fire must needs go to the fire. Take heed lest thou thyself deserve to go there.'"

One day, when Bayazid was walking along the road, a young man who followed him closely, setting his feet in his tracks, said to him, "Tear off a piece of thy cloak and give it me, in order that thy blessing may rest upon me." Bayazid answered, "Although thou

strip Bayazid of his skin and clothe thyself with it, it will profit thee nothing, unless thou reproduce the actions of Bayazid."

Amongst other remarkable utterances of Bayazid are the following. "When from hatred to the world I fled to the Lord, His love so filled my heart that I hated myself." "He who relies on his acts of piety is worse than he who commits sin." "There are those among the servants of the Lord who would utter groans like the damned in hell if one put them in possession of the eight paradises without Him." "A single grain of the love of God is worth more than a hundred thousand paradises." "He whom the Lord loves is known by three distinct signs—his liberality is like the sea, his kindness is like the sun, his humility is like the earth, which allows itself to be trampled on by everyone." "Whoso has the knowledge of the Lord receives from Him intuitional wisdom in such a manner that he needs not to have recourse to anyone to learn anything."

Being asked his age, he replied, "I am four years old." "How is that, Sheikh?" they said. "For seventy years," he said, "I have been enveloped in the veils of this dull world; it is only four years since I disentangled myself from them and see God." Being asked to define Sufism, he said, "Sufism consists in giving up repose, and accepting suffering."

In the last moments of his life he put on a girdle and and seated himself in the "mihrab"* of the mosque. Then, turning his cloak and cap inside out, he said,

*The "Mihrab" is the niche or apse in the wall of the mosque facing towards Mecca.

" My God, I ask for no reward for the austerities I have practised all my life. I say nothing of the prayers which I have prayed during whole nights, of the fasts I have kept during the day, of the number of times I have said the Koran through. O my God, thou knowest that I think nothing of the works which I have done, and that so far from putting trust in them, I would rather forget them. Besides, is it not thou who hast covered my nakedness with the raiment of these good works? As for me, I consider myself as a fire-worshipper who has grown to old age in a state of infidelity. But now I say 'Allah! Allah!' and I cut the girdle of the idolator. I enter Islam as a new proselyte, and I repeat the profession of the Moslem faith. I reckon all that I have done nothing. Deign, for Thy mercy's sake, to blot out all my evil deeds and transgressions." When he was dying, he again ejaculated " Allah! Allah!" Then he cried, " My God, I have passed my life in neglect of thee; I have not served Thee faithfully," and expired.

CHAPTER VII

ZU'N NUN OF EGYPT
(D 860 A D)

IBN KHALLIQAN, the historian, calls Zu'n Nun "the first person of his age for learning, devotion and communion with the Divinity." His father, who was a native of Nubia, was a slave, enfranchised and adopted by the tribe of Koraish. Zu'n Nun, being asked why he had renounced the world, said, "I went forth from Misr (Egypt) journeying to a certain village, and I fell asleep in one of the deserts on the way. And my eye was opened, and lo, a little bird, still blind, fell from its nest to the ground. Then the ground split open and two trays came forth, one of gold, the other of silver; in one was sesame, and in the other water; and the bird ate of that, and drank of this. 'That, said I, 'is a sufficient warning for me; I renounce the world.' And then I did not quit the door of divine mercy till I was let in."

Having been denounced by his enemies to the Caliph Mutawakkil of Bagdad, he was summoned from Egypt to appear before him. On entering into his presence, he addressed a pious exhortation to the Caliph, who shed tears, and dismissed him honourably. After this, whenever men of piety were spoken of before the

Caliph, he would weep and say, "Speaking of pious men, let me have Zu'n Nun."

At Cairo, however, Z'un Nun did not come off so easily. He openly rebuked the vices of the inhabitants, and especially of the local governors, who caused him to be beaten and imprisoned. "All this is as nothing, so I be not separated from thee, O my God," was his exclamation while dragged through the crowded street with blows and insults by the soldiers of the garrison.

Zu'n Nun related the following story of himself. "One day I saw a beautiful palace on the bank of a river where I was performing my devotions. On the roof of this palace I perceived a lovely maiden. Curious of learning who she was, I approached and asked her the name of her master. She answered, 'O Zu'n Nun when you were still a great way off, I took you for a madman, when you came nearer, for a religious man, when you came still nearer, for one of the initiated. I now perceive that you are neither mad, nor religious, nor initiated. If you had been mad, you would not have engaged in religious exercises; if you had been religious, you would not have looked at a person whom you ought not to approach; if you had been initiated, nothing would have drawn your attention away from God.' So saying, she disappeared. I then recognised that she was no mortal, but an angel."

*Zu'n Nun relates that he heard his spiritual teacher Schakran recount the following story. "When I was young, I lived on the eastern bank of the Nile, near Cairo, and gained my livelihood by ferrying passengers across to the western side. One day, as I was sitting

*Vide Palgrave: Asceticism among Muhammadan Nations

in my boat near the river edge, an aged man presented himself before me ; he wore a tattered robe, a staff was in his hand, and a water-skin suspended from his neck. ' Will you ferry me over for the love of God ? ' said he. I answered, ' Yes.' ' And will you fulfil my commsision for the love of God ? ' ' Yes.' Accordingly, I rowed him across to the western side. On alighting from the boat, he pointed to a solitary tree some distance off, and said to me, ' Now go your way, and do not trouble yourself further about me till to-morrow ; nor indeed will it be in your power, even should you desire it, for as soon as I have left you, you will at once forget me. But to-morrow, at this same hour of noon, you will suddenly call me to mind. Then go to that tree which you see before you, I shall be lying dead in its shade. Say the customary prayers over my corpse, and bury me ; then take my robe, my staff and the water-skin, and return with them to the other side of the river ; there deliver them to him who shall first ask them of you. This is my commission.'

" Having said this, he immediately departed. I looked after him, but soon lost sight of him ; and then, as he had himself already forewarned me, I utterly forgot him. But next day, at the approach of noon, I suddenly remembered the event, and hastily crossing the river alone, I came to the western bank, and then made straight for the tree. In its shade I found him stretched out at full length, with a calm and smiling face, but dead. I recited over him the customary prayers, and buried him in the sand at the foot of the tree ; then I took the garment, the staff and the water-skin, and returned to my boat. Arrived at the eastern

side, I found standing on the shore to meet me a young man whom I knew as a most dissolute fellow of the town, a hired musician by profession. He was gaudily dressed, his countenance bore the traces of recent debauch, and his fingers were stained with henna. 'Give me the bequest,' said he. Amazed at such a demand from such a character, 'What bequest?' I answered. 'The staff, the water-skin and the garment,' was his reply. Thereupon I drew them, though unwillingly, from the bottom of the boat, where I had concealed them, and gave them to him. He at once stripped off his gay clothes, put on the tattered robe, hung the water-skin round his neck, took the staff in his hand, and turned to depart.

"I, however, caught hold of him and exclaimed, 'For God's sake, ere you go, tell me the meaning of this, and how this bequest has become yours, such as I know you.' 'By no merit of my own, certainly,' answered he; 'but I passed last night at a wedding-feast, with many boon companions, in singing, drinking deep, and mad debauch. As the night wore away and morning drew near, tired out with pleasure and heavy with wine, I lay down to sleep. Then in my sleep one stood by me, and said, "God has at this very hour taken to himself the soul of such an ascetic, and has chosen you to fill his place on earth. Rise and go to the river bank, there you will meet a ferryman in his boat; demand from him the bequest. He will give you a garment, a staff and a water-skin; take them, and live as their first owner lived."'

"Such was his story. He then bade me farewell, and went his way. But I wept bitterly over my own

loss, in that I had not been chosen in his place as successor to the dead saint, and thought that such a favour would have been more worthily bestowed on me than on him. But that same night, as I slept, I heard a voice saying unto me, 'Schakran, is it grief to thee that I have called an erring servant of Mine to repentance? The favour is My free gift, and I bestow such on whom I will, nor yet do I forget those who seek Me.' I awoke from sleep, and repented of my impatient ambition."

Zu'n Nun had a disciple who had made the pilgrimage to the Kaaba forty times, and during forty years had passed all his nights in devotional exercises. One day he came to Zu'n Nun and said, "During the forty years that I have practised austerity, nothing of the unseen world has been revealed to me; the Friend (*i.e.*, God) has not spoken to me, nor cast upon me a single look. I fear lest I die and leave this world in despair. Thou, who are the physician of sick souls, devise some means for my cure." "Go," Zu'n Nun replied, "this evening, omit your prayers, eat as much as you like, and go to sleep. Doubtless, if the Friend does not look upon you with an eye of mercy, He will at any rate look upon you with an eye of anger." The dervish went away, but said his prayers as usual, saying to himself that it would be wrong to omit them. Then he ate to satiety, and went to sleep. In his dreams he saw the Prophet, who said to him, "O Dervish, the Friend sends thee his salutation, and says, 'Surely that man is pusillanimous who, as soon as he has arrived at My court, hastens to return; set thy feet on this path like a brave man, and then We will give thee

the reward for all the austerities which thou hast practised for forty years, and make thee reach the goal of thy desires.' "

Perhaps someone may ask why Zu'n Nun told his disciple to omit his prayers. We should consider that sheikhs are physicians knowing the remedy for every kind of disease. Now there are many diseases whose treatment involves the use of poisons. Besides, Zu'n Nun knew well that his disciple would certainly not neglect his prayers. There are in the spiritual path (*tariqat*) many things not justifiable according to the written law (*shariat*). It is thus that the Lord ordered Abraham to slay his son, an act unlawful according to the written law. But whoever, without having attained to so high a degree in the spiritual life as Zu'n Nun, should act as he did in this matter would be a being without faith or law; for each one in his actions must conform to the decisions of the written law.

Zu'n Nun related once the following. " When I was making the circuit of the Kaaba, I saw a man with a pale face and emaciated frame. I said to him, ' Dost thou really love Him ? ' ' Yes,' he answered. ' Does the Friend come near thee ? ' ' Yes, assuredly.' ' Is He kind to thee ? ' ' Yes, certainly.' ' What ! ' I exclaimed, ' the Friend approaches thee, He is kind to thee, and look at the wretched state of thy body ! ' He replied, ' Simpleton ! Knowest thou not that they whom the Friend approaches most nearly, are the most severely tried ? ' "

" One day," said Zu'n Nun, " when I was travelling, I arrived at a plain covered with snow. I saw a fire-worshipper who was strewing seeds of millet there.

'O infidel,' I said, 'why are you strewing this millet?' 'To-day,' he said, 'as it has been snowing, I reflected that the birds would find nothing to eat, and I strewed this millet that they may find some food, and I hope that the Most High will perchance have mercy upon me.' 'The grain which an infidel sows,' I replied, 'does not germinate, and thou art a fire-worshipper.' 'Well,' he answered, 'even if God does not accept my offering, may I not hope that He sees what I am doing?' 'Certainly He sees it,' I said. 'If He sees it,' he remarked 'that is enough for me.'

"Long afterwards I met this infidel at Mecca making the circuit of the Kaaba. He recognised me, and exclaimed, 'O Zu'n Nun, the Most High, witnessing my act, has accepted it. The grain I sowed has indeed sprung up, for God has given me faith, and brought me to His House.' "Seeing him," added Zu'n Nun, "I rejoiced, and cried, 'My God, dost Thou give paradise to an infidel for a handful of millet seed?' Then I heard a voice reply, 'O Zu'n Nun, the mercy of the Lord is without limit.'"

Zu'n Nun daily asked three things of God in prayer. The first was never to have any certainty of his means of subsistence for the morrow. The second was never to be in honour among men. And the third was to see God's face in mercy at his death-hour. Near the end of his life, one of his more intimate disciples ventured to question him on this triple prayer, and what had been its result. "As for the first and second petitions," answered Zu'n Nun, "God has liberally granted them, and I trust in His goodness that He will not refuse me the third."

During his last moments he was asked what he wished. "I wish," he replied, "that if I have only one more breath left, it may be spent in blessing the Most High." As he said this, he breathed his last.

He died 860 A.D., and his tomb is still an object of popular veneration at Cairo.

CHAPTER VIII

MANSUR HALLAJ
(D 922 A D)

MANSUR Hallaj ("the cotton-comber"), a Persian, of Zoroastrian lineage, was a pupil of Junaid of Bagdad, a more sober-minded Sufi than his contemporary Bayazid Bastami. Mansur himself however was of an enthusiastic temperament, and took no pains to guard his language. One of his extraordinary utterances, "I am the truth," led at last to his execution, "the Truth" being one of the recognised names of God in Muhammadan nomenclature. Notwithstanding this, even at the present day he passes among the Sufis for one of their greatest saints, while the more orthodox regard him as a daring blasphemer who received his deserts. "His contemporaries," says a Muhammadan writer, "entertained as many different views concerning him as the Jews and Christians with respect to the Messiah." Certainly when we read the various accounts of him by authors of different tendencies, if we did not know to the contrary, we might suppose ourselves reading about different persons bearing the same name. The orthodox regard him chiefly as a sorcerer in league with supernatural powers, whether celestial or infernal, for he caused, it is said, summer fruits to appear in winter and *vice versa*. He could

reveal in open day what had been done in secret, knew everyone's most private thoughts, and when he extended his empty hand in the air he drew it back full of coins bearing the inscription, "Say: God is One." Among the moderate Shiites, who had more than one point of contact with the Sufis, it is not a question of sorcery at all. For them the doctrine of Hallaj, which he had also practised himself, meant that by using abstinence, by refusing pleasure and by chastising the flesh, man can lift himself gradually to the height of the elect and even of angels. If he perseveres in this path he is gradually purged from everything human, he receives the spirit of God as Jesus did, and all that he does is done by God.

The Shiites say, moreover, that the reason for which Hallaj was put to death should be found not in his utterances but in the astonishing influence which he exercised over the highest classes of society, on princes and their courts, and which caused much disquietude to others, especially to the orthodox mullahs. Hallaj has even been judged not unfavourably by those among the orthodox who were characterised by a certain breadth of view, and who, like Ghazzali, although they disliked free-thinking, yet wished for a religion of the heart, and were not content with the dry orthodoxy of the great majority of theologians. Ghazzali indeed has gone so far as to put a favourable construction on the following sayings of Hallaj: "I am the Truth," "There is nothing in Paradise except God." He justifies them on the ground of the speaker's excessive love for God. In his eyes, as well as in those of other great authorities, Hallaj is a saint and

a martyr. The most learned theologians of the tenth century, on the contrary, believed that he deserved execution as an infidel and a blasphemer. Even the greatest admirers of Hallaj, the Sufis, are not agreed regarding him. Some of them question whether he were a thorough-going pantheist, and think that he taught a numerical Pantheism, an immanence of the Deity in certain souls only. But this is not the opinion of the majority of the Sufis. The high esteem which they entertain for him is best understood by comparing the account they give of his martyrdom with that by orthodox writers. The latter runs as follows :

The common people of Bagdad were circulating reports that Hallaj could raise the dead, and that the Jinn* were his slaves, and brought him whatever he desired. Hamid, the vizier of the Caliph Muqtadir, was much disturbed by this, and requested the Caliph to have Hallaj and his partizans arrested. But the grand chamberlain Nasir was strongly in his favour, and opposed this ; his influence, however, being less than that of the vizier, Hallaj and some of his followers were arrested. When the latter were questioned, they admitted that they regarded their leader as God, since he raised the dead ; but when he was questioned himself, he said, " God preserve me from claiming divinity or the dignity of a prophet ; I am a mortal man who adore the Most High."

The vizier then summoned two cadis† and the principal theologians, and desired that they should give sentence against Hallaj. They answered that

*Spirits. †Judges.

they could not pronounce sentence without proofs and without confession on the part of the accused. The vizier, foiled in his attempt, caused Hallaj to be brought several times before him, and tried by artfully devised questions to elicit from him some heretical utterance, but in vain. Finally he succeeded in finding in one of his books the assertion that if a man wished to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, but was hindered from doing so by some reason or other, he could perform the equivalent of it in the following way. He should go through all the prescribed circuits in a chamber carefully cleansed and closed. In this chamber also he should give a feast of the choicest food to thirty orphans, should wait upon them himself, make them a present of clothing, and give them each seven dirhems.* All this, he maintained, would be a work more meritorious than the pilgrimage itself.

The vizier showed to the cadi Abou Amr this passage which scandalised him. Abou Amr then asked Hallaj, "Whence did you derive this idea?" Hallaj quoted a work of Hassan of Basra, from which he said he had taken it. "It is a lie, O infidel, whose death is lawful," exclaimed the cadi; "the book you speak of was expounded to us at Mecca by one of the learned, but what you have written is not in it." The vizier eagerly caught up the expressions "O infidel," etc., which escaped the cadi in his excitement, and asked him to pronounce sentence of death. The cadi refused; that, he said, was not his intention; but the vizier insisted, and ended by obtaining the sentence of death, which was signed by all the maulvies present. In vain Hallaj

*A small coin.

sought to prove that the condemnation was unjust. " You have no right," he exclaimed, " to shed my blood. My religion is Islam ; I believe in the traditions handed down from the Prophet, and I have written on this subject books which you can find everywhere. I have always acknowledged the four Imams* and the first four Caliphs. I invoke the help of God to save my life ! "

He was taken to prison. The vizier despatched the sentence of death, signed by the maulvies, to the Caliph, who ordered that Hallaj should be handed to the Chief of Police and receive a thousand strokes of the rod, and then another thousand if he did not die from the effects of the first scourging, and finally be decapitated. The vizier, however, did not transmit the order accurately, but modified it as follows : " If Hallaj does not die under the blows of the rod, let him first have a hand cut off, then a foot, then the other hand and foot. Lastly let his head be cut off, and his body burnt."

Hallaj underwent the terrible punishment with admirable courage, and when his body had been burnt the ashes were cast into the Tigris. But his disciples did not believe in his death ; they were persuaded that a person resembling him had been martyred in his place, and that he would show himself again after forty days. Some declared that they had met him mounted on an ass on the road leading to Nahrawan, and had heard him say, " Be not like those simpletons who think that I have been scourged and put to death."

*The founders of the four orthodox Sects.

Thus far the theologians' account. That given by Fariduddin Attar in his "Tazkirat-ul-Aulia" is as follows:

This is he who was a martyr in the way of truth, whose rank has become exalted, whose outer and inner man were pure, who has been a pattern of loyalty in love, whom an irresistible longing drew towards the contemplation of the face of God; this is the enthusiast Mansur Hallaj, may the mercy of God be upon him! He was intoxicated with a love whose flames consumed him. The miracles he worked were such that the learned were thunderstruck at them. He was a man whose range of vision was immense, whose words were riddles, and profoundly versed in the knowledge of mysteries. Born in the canton of Baida in the province of Shiraz, he grew up at Wasit.

Abd Allah Khafif used to say, "Mansur really possessed the knowledge of the truth." "I and Mansur," declared Shibli,* "followed the same path; they regarded me as mad, and my life was saved thereby, while Mansur perished because he was sane." If Mansur had been really astray in error, the two learned men we have just quoted would not have spoken of him in such terms. Many wise men, however, have reproached him for revealing the mysteries of truth to the vulgar herd.

When he had grown up, he was two years in the service of Abd Allah Teshtari. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and on his return became a disciple of the Sufi Junaid. One day, when Mansur was plying him with questions on certain obscure and difficult points,

*A celebrated contemporary Sufi

Junaid said, " O Mansur, before very long you will redden the head of the stake."* " The day when I redden the head of the stake," rejoined Mansur, " you will cast away the garment of the dervish and assume that of ordinary men." It is related that on the day when Mansur was taken to execution all the Ulama† signed the sentence of death. " Junaid also must sign," said the Caliph. Junaid accordingly repaired to the college of the Ulama, where, after putting on a mullah's robe and turban, he recorded in writing his opinion that " though apparently Mansur deserved death, inwardly he possessed the knowledge of the Most High."

Having left Bagdad, Mansur spent a year at Tashter, then he spent five years in travelling through Khorassan, Seistan and Turkestan. On his return to Bagdad, the number of his followers largely increased, and he gave utterance to many strange sayings which excited the suspicions of the orthodox. At last he began to say, " I am the Truth." These words were repeated to the Caliph, and many persons renounced Mansur as a religious leader and appeared as witnesses against him. Among these was Junaid, to whom the Caliph said, " O Junaid, what is the meaning of this saying of Mansur ? " " O Caliph," answered Junaid, " this man should be put to death, for such a saying cannot be reasonably explained." The Caliph then ordered him to be cast into prison. There for a whole year he continued to hold discussions with the learned. At the end of that time the Caliph forbade that anyone should have access to him ; in consequence, no one

*Referring to punishment by impaling. † Learned men.

went to see him for five months except Abd Allah Khafif. Another time Ibn Ata sent someone to say to him, " O Sheikh, withdraw what you said, so that you may escape death." " Nay, rather he who sent you to me should ask forgiveness," replied Mansur. Ibn Ata, hearing this, shed tears and said, " Alas, he is irreparably lost ! "

In order to force him to retract, he was first of all given three hundred blows with a rod, but in vain. He was then led to execution. A crowd of about a hundred thousand men followed him, and as he looked round on them, he cried, " True ! True ! True ! I am the Truth ! "

It is said that among them was a dervish who asked him, " What is love ? " " Thou shalt see," Mansur replied, " to-day and to-morrow and the day after." And, as it happened, that day he was put to death, the next day his body was burnt, and on the third his ashes were scattered to the winds. He meant that such would be the results of his love to God. On his son asking of him a last piece of advice, " While the people of the world," he said, " spend their energies on earthly objects, do thou apply thyself to a study, the least portion of which is worth all that men and Jinn can produce—the study of truth."

As he walked along lightly and alertly, though loaded with many chains, they asked him the reason of his confident bearing. " It is," he said, " because I am going to the presence of the King." Then he added, " My Host, in whom there is no injustice, has presented me with the drink which is usually given to a guest ; but when the cups have began to circulate

he has sent for the executioner with his sword and leathern carpet. Thus fares it with him who drinks with the Dragon* in July."

When he reached the scaffold, he turned his face towards the western gate of Bagdad, and set his foot on the first rung of the ladder, "the first step heavenward," as he said. Then he girded himself with a girdle, and, lifting up his hands towards heaven, turned towards Mecca, and said exultantly, "Let it be as He has willed." When he reached the platform of the scaffold, a group of his disciples called out to him, "What do you say regarding us, thy disciples, and regarding those who deny thy claims and are about to stone thee?" "They will have a two-fold reward, and you only a single one," he answered, "for you limit yourselves to having a good opinion of me, while they are carried on by their zeal for the unity of God and for the written law. Now in the law the doctrine of God's unity is fundamental, while a good opinion is merely accessory."

Shibli the Sufi stood in front of him and cried, "Did we not tell thee not to gather men together?"† Then he added, "O Hallaj, what is Sufism?" "Thou seest," replied Hallaj, "the least part of it." "What is then the highest?" asked Shibli. "Thou canst not attain to it," he answered.

Then they all began to stone him. Shibli making common cause with the others threw mud at him. Hallaj uttered a cry. "What," said one, "you have not flinched under this hail of stones, and now you cry out because of a little mud! Why is that?" "Ah!"

*i.e. God. †Koran V, v 70.

he replied, " they do not know what they are doing, and are excusable ; but he grieves me because he knows I ought not to be stoned at all."

When they cut off his hands, he laughed and said, " To cut off the hands of a fettered man is easy, but to sever the links which bind me to the Divinity would be a task indeed." Then they cut off his two feet. He said smiling, " With these I used to accomplish my earthly journeys, but I have another pair of feet with which I can traverse both worlds. Hew these off if ye can ! " Then, with his bleeding stumps, he rubbed his cheeks and arms. " Why do you do that ? " he was asked. " I have lost much blood," he answered, " and lest you should think the pallor of my countenance betokens fear, I have reddened my cheeks." " But why your arms." " The ablutions of love must be made in blood," he replied.

Then his eyes were torn out. At this a tumult arose in the crowd. Some burst into tears, others cast stones at him. When they were about to cut out his tongue, he exclaimed, " Wait a little ; I have something to say." Then, lifting his face towards heaven, he said, " My God, for the sake of these sufferings, which they inflict on me because of Thee, do not inflict loss upon them nor deprive them of their share of felicity. Behold, upon the scaffold of my torture I enjoy the contemplation of Thy glory." His last words were, " Help me, O Thou only One, to whom there is no second ! " and he recited the following verse of the Koran, " Those who do not believe say, ' Why does not the day of judgment hasten ? ' Those who believe tremble at the mention of it, for they know

that it is near." Then they cut out his tongue, and he smiled. Finally, at the time of evening prayer, his head was cut off. His body was burnt, and the ashes thrown into the Tigris.

The high opinion entertained of Mansur Hallaj by Fariduddin Attar, as seen in the above account, has been echoed by subsequent Sufi writers. Jalaluddin Rumi, the great mystic poet, says of him :

" Pharaoh said ' I am the Truth,'* and was laid low.
Mansur Hallaj said ' I am the Truth,' and escaped free.
Pharaoh's ' I ' was followed by the curse of God.
Mansur's ' I ' was followed by the mercies of God.
Because Pharaoh was a stone, Mansur a ruby,
Pharaoh an enemy of light, Mansur a friend.
Mansur's ' I am He," was a deep mystic saying,
Expressing union with the light, not mere incarnation."†

Similarly Abdurranman, the chief poet of the Afghans says :

" Every one who is crucified like Mansur,
After death his cross becomes a fruitful tree."

*According to the Koran, Pharaoh claimed divinity.

†Whinfield's Masnavi p. 248.

CHAPTER IX

HABIB AJAMI
(D 773 A D)

HABIB Ajami was a rich usurer of Basra, and used to spend most of his time going about and collecting the money which was due to him. He used also to insist on being paid for the time so spent. One day he had gone to the house of one of his debtors, and when he had knocked at the door the debtor's wife said to him, " My husband is not at home." " If he is not," said Habib, " pay me for my lost time and I will go." " But I have nothing," replied the woman, " except a neck of mutton." She fetched it and gave it to him. Habib took it home to his wife, and told her to cook it. " But," said she, " we have no bread or wood." So Habib went off again, exacted his indemnity for lost time from another debtor, and bought wood and bread, which he took home. His wife set about cooking the food, when a dervish appeared at the door asking alms. " Go away," said Habib to him ; " you won't become rich with what you get here." The dervish departed in silence. Habib's wife prepared to put the food on the plates, but when she looked into the cooking pot she saw a mass of blood. Filled with terror, she said to Habib, " Your harshness towards the dervish has brought

this misfortune on us. All the food in the cooking pot has turned to blood." Habib, frightened himself, repented, and, as a pledge of the reality of his conversion, vowed to abandon the practice of usury. The following day was a Friday. Habib, having gone out, saw as he was walking along, children playing on the road. They no sooner saw him than they said to each other, " Here is the usurer coming ; let us be off, lest the dust raised by his feet touch us and we become cursed like him." At these words Habib Ajami was profoundly stirred, and went off to consult Hasan Basri, whom he found in the act of preaching on the terrors of the judgment-day. Habib was so overcome with fear that he fainted. When he came to himself, he made public confession of his sins in the presence of Hasan Basri and the congregation.

Then he left the mosque and returned home. One of his debtors, seeing him on the road, attempted to get out of his way, but Habib called after him and said, " Don't fly away ; formerly you used to avoid me, but now it is I who seek to avoid you." As he approached his house he met the same children as before, and heard them say to one another, " We must get out of the way, lest the dust raised by our feet should soil Habib, who has repented." Habib, hearing this, exclaimed, " O Lord, in that very hour, when, returning from my errors, I have taken refuge with Thee, Thou hast put affection for me in the hearts of Thy friends, and changed into blessings the curses which used to greet my name."

He remitted all the debts that were due to him, and gave public notice that all his debtors had only to

come and take back their bonds. They all came and did so. Then he gave away all the wealth he had been amassing for years, till he had nothing left. He built a hermitage on the banks of the Euphrates, where he gave himself up to a devotional life, spending whole nights in prayer. During the day he attended the instructions of Hasan Basri. At the commencement of his religious life he received the appellation " Ajami " (ill-instructed) because he could not pronounce the words of the Koran properly.

After some time his wife began to complain, saying, " I must really have some money ; we have neither food to eat nor clothes to wear." At this time Habib was in the habit of going every day to his hermitage on the banks of the river, and spending the day in devotional exercises. In the evenings he came home. One evening his wife asked him where he had been during the day. " I have been working," he replied. " Very well, where are your wages ? " she asked. " My employer," said Habib, " is a generous person. He has promised to pay me at the end of ten days." So he continued spending his time as before. On the tenth day, as he reflected in his hermitage, he wondered what he should say to his wife when he returned in the evening, and she wanted something to eat. That day four men came to the house of Habib. One brought a quantity of flour, another a sheep, a third a jar of honey, and the fourth a bottle of oil. Not long after them a fifth came with a purse of gold. They gave all these to Habib's wife, saying to her, " Your husband's Employer has sent these," and they added, " Tell your husband that his Master bids him continue his

work, and He will continue his wages." Then they departed.

In the evening Habib came home, pensive and anxious. As he entered the house an odour of cooking greeted him. His wife hastened to meet him, and said, " O Habib, go on working for your employer, for he is very generous, and has sent all that you see here, with this message that you are to go on working, and he will continue to pay you." Hearing this, Habib became more confirmed than ever in his resolve to give up the world and to live to God.

One day Hasan Basri paid Habib a visit in his hermitage. The latter had two barley loaves and a little salt, which he placed before his guest. Just as the latter was commencing to eat and in the act of stretching out his hand, a dervish appeared at the door and asked for alms. Habib immediately handed him the two loaves. Hasan, somewhat ruffled, said, " Habib, you are a good man, but you would be none the worse for a little culture and intelligence. Don't you know that one ought never to take food away from before a guest ? At any rate, you might have given one of those loaves to the dervish, and left the other." Habib made no reply. Some minutes afterwards a man came carrying in a napkin a roast lamb, a large plate of sweetmeats, and some money. He set them before Habib and said, " Sir, so and so sends you these with his compliments." Habib and Hasan made a hearty meal, and Habib distributed the money to some passing mendicants. Then he said to Hasan Basri, " My master, you are a good man, but it would have been better had you shown more sincerity in

this matter, for then you would have possessed both knowledge and sincerity, and the two go well together."

On another occasion Hasan Basri arrived at Habib's hermitage just as the latter was commencing his evening prayers. Hearing him pronounce the words " al hamdu* " as " al hemdu," Hasan said to himself, " This man cannot pronounce the words of the Koran properly ; it is impossible to pray with him," and he said his prayers apart. That same night he saw the Lord in a dream, and asked him, " Lord, what must I do to gain Thy approval." An answer came, " O Hasan, thou hadst gained it, but didst not appreciate its value. Thou shouldest have prayed with Habib Ajami. Such a prayer would have had more worth than all those which thou hast made in the course of thy life. The tongues of others may speak rightly, but the heart of Habib feels rightly."

One day Hasan Basri, flying from the agents of Hejjaj ibn Yusuf, the bloodthirsty governor of Irak, took refuge in Habib's hermitage. The pursuers, arriving, asked Habib whether Hasan had passed that way. " No," he said, " he is here in my dwelling." They entered, and seeing no one said to Habib, " O Habib, whatever treatment Hejjaj deals out to you, you will have richly deserved it. Why did you lie to us ? " " I tell you," said Habib, " Hasan is within this dwelling ; if you don't see him, what can I do ? " They again made a search, but not succeeding in finding Hasan, departed. Hasan then came out of his hiding-place, and said, " O Habib, is this the way thou re-

*" Praise to God."

payest thy debt to thy master, by betraying him ? " " Master," answered Habib, " it is thanks to my truthfulness that thou hast escaped. If I had told a lie we should have both been caught." Hasan then said, " What words didst thou recite as a safeguard ? " " I repeated ten times," said Habib, " the ' Verse of the throne,'* ten times ' Believe in the Apostle,'† six times ' Say, there is one God,' and in addition I said, ' Lord, I entrust Hasan to Thee ; take care of him.' "

Hasan then asked Habib how he had arrived at such a high degree of sanctity. " I spend my time," he said, " in purifying my heart, while you spend yours in blackening paper " (Hasan having written many theological works). " Alas ! " said Hasan. " Must then my knowledge benefit others, only while I have nothing but the outward show of it ? "

" We must not suppose," says Fariduddin Attar in narrating the above incident, " that Habib had really attained a higher degree of piety than Hasan ; for in the eyes of the Lord nothing is higher than knowledge. The doctors of Islam have said truly, ' In the spiritual path the gift of performing miracles is the fourteenth stage, while knowledge is the eighteenth. The gift of miracles is the reward of many works of piety, while the knowledge of mysteries is revealed only to profound meditation. Consider the case of Solomon, upon whom be peace ! He understood the language of birds, and yet, though arrived at such a high degree of knowledge, he submitted to the Law given by Moses, and acted according to its instructions.' "

*Koran c. 2, v. 256. †Koran c. 4, v. 135.

Every time that he heard the Koran read, Habib used to weep bitterly. Some one said to him, " You are a barbarian (the literal meaning of the word 'Ajami '). The Koran is in Arabic, and you don't understand it ; why then do you weep ? " " It is true," he said " my tongue is barbarian, but my heart is Arab."

CHAPTER X

AVICENNA (IBN SINA)
(A D 980—1037)

AVICENNA, now best known as a philosopher, was perhaps better known in the middle ages as a kind of magician owing to the mastery of medical science. His father was a native of Balkh, but removed from that city to Bokhara; having displayed great abilities as a government tax collector he was appointed to fill that office in a town called Kharmaithen, one of the dependencies of Bokhara. Here Avicenna was born. At the age of ten years he was a perfect master of the Koran, and had studied arithmetic and algebra.

The philosopher An-Natili having visited them about that time, Avicenna's father lodged him in his own house, and Avicenna studied under him logic, Euclid and the Almagest (an astronomical treatise of Ptolemy). He soon surpassed his master, and explained to him difficulties and obscurities which the latter had not understood. On the departure of An-Natili, Avicenna applied himself to the study of natural philosophy, divinity, and other sciences. He then felt an inclination to learn medicine, and studied medical works; he treated patients, not for gain, but in order to increase his knowledge. When he was sixteen years of age, physicians of the highest eminence came to him for

instruction and to learn from him those modes of treatment which he had discovered by his practice. But the greater portion of his time was given to the study of logic and philosophy. " When I was perplexed about any question," he says in an autobiographical fragment, " I went to the mosque and prayed God to resolve the difficulty. At night I returned home ; I lit the lamp, and set myself to read and write. When I felt myself growing tired and sleepy I drank a glass of wine, which renewed my energy, and then resumed reading. When finally I fell asleep I kept dreaming of the problems which had exercised my waking thoughts, and as a matter of fact often discovered the solution of them in my sleep."

When he came across the " Metaphysics " of Aristotle, that work in spite of his acuteness seemed to present an insuperable difficulty. " I read this book," he says, " but I did not understand it, and the purport of it remained so obscure to me that though I read it forty times through and could repeat it by heart, I was as far from understanding it as ever. In despair, I said to myself, ' This book is quite incomprehensible.' One day at the time of afternoon prayer I went to a bookseller's, and there I met a friend who had a book in his hand, which he praised and showed me. I looked at it in a listless way and handed it back, certain that it was of no use to me. But he said to me, ' Buy it ; it is very cheap. I will sell it you for three dirhems ; its owner is in need of money.' It was a commentary of Al Farabi on the metaphysics of Aristotle. I bought it, took it home and began to read it. Immediately all my difficulties were cleared up, as I knew the " Meta-

physics" by heart. I was delighted, and the next day distributed alms to the poor in order to show my gratitude to God."

About this time the Emir Nuh Ibn Mansur, prince of Khorassan, fell ill, and having heard of Avicenna's talent, sent for him and was restored to health under his treatment. As a reward, Avicenna was allowed to study in the prince's library, which contained several chests of rare manuscripts. Here he discovered treatises on the sciences of the ancients, and other subjects, the essence of which he extracted. It happened some time afterwards that this library was destroyed by fire, and Avicenna remained the sole depository of the knowledge which it contained. Some persons even said that it was he who had set fire to the library because he alone was acquainted with its contents, and wished to be their sole possessor.

At the age of eighteen he had completely mastered all the sciences which he had studied. The death of his father and the fall of the Samanide dynasty forced him to quit those literary treasures which he had learnt to appreciate so well. At the age of twenty-two he left Bokhara and went to Jorjan, the capital of Khwarezm where he frequented the Court of Shah Ali ibn Mamoun. At this time the celebrated Sultan Mahmoud of Ghazni, having heard that there were several learned men, and among them Avicenna, at the Court of Mamoun, requested the latter to send them to him. Several of them went, but Avicenna refused, probably because his orthodoxy was suspected, and Sultan Mahmoud was a strict Sunni. Mahmoud was much displeased at not seeing Avicenna appear at his court with the

rest, and sent descriptions and drawings of him in several directions in order that he might be arrested. In the meantime, Avicenna finding the allowance made to him at the Court of Mamoun insufficient, left Jorjan and wandered through the towns of Khorassan. Finally he settled in a little village near Balkh. There he composed the greater part of his philosophical works, and among others the book on the " Eternal Principle and the Return of the Soul." Some time afterwards he was called to Hamadan to treat the Buwayhid Sultan Shams-ed Dawla, who suffered from a dangerous gastric malady. He was successful in curing the Sultan, who showed his gratitude by appointing Avicenna his vizier.

The affairs of State did not prevent Avicenna from carrying on his studies, for during his stay at Hamadan he found time to commence his exposition of the philosophy of Aristotle entitled the " Shifa " which he undertook at the Sultan's request. At this time Avicenna presented the rare spectacle of a philosopher discharging the functions of a statesman, without injury to either statesmanship or philosophy. His great physical energy enabled him to spend the day in the service of the Sultan and a great part of the night in philosophical discussions with his disciples. His writings, which date from this time, allow us to judge with what success he pursued his philosophical studies, and we have every reason to believe that he was equally successful in the conduct of affairs, for, after the death of Shams-ed-Dawla, his son and successor Taj-ed-Dawla requested him to retain the post of vizier.

Avicenna appreciated this testimony to his worth, but declined the offer in order to devote himself to the completion of his great work, the Shifa. But even in his studious retirement he was not out of reach of political disturbance. Suspected of carrying on secret correspondence with Ala-ed-Dawla, the governor of Ispahan, an enemy of Taj-ed-Dawla, Avicenna was imprisoned in a neighbouring fortress. He would probably have remained there a long time had not the fortune of war put Ala-ed-Dawla in possession of Hamadan, Avicenna was liberated after an imprisonment of four months. Despite this misadventure he succeeded during his stay at Hamadan in completing the Shifa and several medical treatises, besides a little mystical allegory, " Hay ibn Yokdhan " (" The living one, son of the Waking One "). This shows the mystical side of Avicenna's philosophy, and we therefore subjoin an abridgment and explanation of it.

" During my sojourn in a certain country, I used to make excursions with my friends to pleasant spots in our vicinity. One day when strolling out with them I met an old man who, in spite of his advanced age, seemed brimful of juvenile ardour, being neither bent nor having white hairs. We felt attracted by him and accosted him. After the usual salutations, I opened the conversation by requesting him to inform us about himself, his trade, name, family, and country. ' As to my name and family,' he answered, ' I am called Hay ibn Yokdhan, and I was born in Jerusalem ; as to my occupation, it consists in traversing all the regions of the earth, always following the direction indicated by my Father. He has entrusted to me the

keys of all the sciences and guided me through all ways even to the utmost bounds of the universe.' We continued to ask him questions regarding different branches of science till we touched on the science of physiognomy, on which he spoke with marvellous precision, taking it as the starting point of a discourse which he delivered to us."

This exordium may be interpreted as follows: "During the sojourn of my soul in the body I felt a desire under the guidance of my imagination and my senses to examine whatever presented itself to me. While thus engaged, I came in contact with active Intelligence (the old man), the salutary effects of which I had long experienced and which had preserved my vigour unabated. I commenced to examine the nature of this Intelligence freed as it is from all material grossness and yet in a certain way, linked to the material world. Since life includes the two conditions necessary to actual development, consciousness and movement, he calls himself 'Hay' 'the Living,' and adds 'ibn Yokdhan' 'Son of the Waking,' meaning that he derives his origin from a Being higher than himself, Who is always awake and has no need of repose. His birthplace is the holy city of Jerusalem, free from all earthly stain, and his occupation is to traverse the highest regions open to intelligence in order to understand the nature of his heavenly Father, who has committed to him the keys of all forms of knowledge. Thus, favoured by his help, we arrive at Logic, a science which leads by sure and evident conclusions to a knowledge of what is remote and occult. For this reason logic is indicated by the term 'physi-

ognomy' which judges of the hidden by its outward manifestation."

After this commencement the allegory proceeds: "Logic," continued the old man, "is a science whose income is paid in ready money; she brings to light what nature conceals, and what may be a source of either joy or sorrow; she points you out the way of freedom from earthly entanglements and sensual propensities. If her healing hand touches you, it will give you salutary support, but if your weakness cause you to stumble, you will be exposed to ruin, accompanied as you always are by bad companions* from which it is impossible to get free.

"As to thy nearest companion (imagination), he is a confused babbler, abounding in futility and falsity; he brings you news in which truth and falsehood are mingled together, and that, though he professes to be your guide and enlightener. He often brings matters before you very ill-suited to your dignity and position, and you must be at the pains of distinguishing the false from the true in them. But for all that, he is very necessary to you, and would exert a healthy influence on you, if his false witness did not lead you into error.

"But your companion on the right (irascibility) is still more impetuous, and it is only with the greatest difficulty that his attacks can be repulsed by reason or avoided by dexterity. He is like a blazing fire, a rushing torrent, a runaway horse, or a lioness deprived of its young. Similarly with your left-hand

*The bad companions of man which hinder his intellectual progress are unregulated imagination, irascibility and carnal concupiscence. Death alone delivers him and transports him to the celestial country of true repose.

companion (carnal concupiscence) whose evil influence springs from insatiable appetite ; he is like a famished beast let loose to graze. Such are your companions, unhappy mortal, to whom you are tied, and from whom no release is to be obtained except by migrating to those countries where such creatures are unknown. But till you are allowed to do so, your hand at any rate must tame them ; beware of flinging the rein on their necks and giving them free course ; if you hold the reins tight they will submit, and you will be master."

"After I had heard this description of my companions, I began to recognise the justice of it, and accordingly I varied gentleness and severity in my treatment of them. Alternately I and they had the upper hand. But I constantly invoked the help of God in this respect, until I was delivered. Meanwhile I prepared for the journey, and the old man added this last counsel : 'You and those like you will be constantly impeded in this journey, and the road will be very difficult for you, unless you can succeed in quitting this world for ever ; but you cannot hasten the time fixed by God. You must therefore be content with a frequently interrupted progress ; sometimes you will make way, sometimes you will be at the beck and call of your companions. When you apply yourself with your whole heart to making progress, you will succeed, and your companions will lose all influence over you ; but if you connive at their importunities, they will conquer you, and you will altogether lose touch with me.'

"I then asked the old man for information on the various regions of the universe, of which he possessed ample knowledge, and he replied : 'The universe has

three parts; first, the visible heaven and earth, the nature of which is ascertainable by ordinary observation. But as to the other two parts, they are marvellous indeed; one is on the East, the other on the West. Each of these regions is separated from our world by a barrier which only a few elect souls succeed in passing, and that only by divine grace; the man who relies only on his natural powers is excluded from them. What makes the passage thither easier is to wash in the flowing waters of the fountain whose source is close to a stagnant pool.* The traveller who has found the way to it and is refreshed by its healing waters, will feel himself endued with a marvellous energy, which will help him to traverse savage deserts. Unfatigued he will scale the heights of Mount Kaf, and the guardians of hell will lose all power to seize him and to cast him into the abyss.'

" We asked him to explain more precisely the situation of this fountain, and he said: ' You are doubtless aware that perpetual darkness surrounds the pole† unpenetrated by any ray of light till God permits. But he who

*The flowing waters signify logic and metaphysics, which help man to attain to the unknown. Because they provoke argument and discussion, they are called " flowing." The stagnant pool signifies positive science, which is the basis of philosophy. The man who is refreshed by the flowing waters of philosophy will grasp the scheme of the universe without losing himself in the confusion of details; he will scale the heights of science (the encircling mountain of Kaf) without being held back by worldly entanglements.

†The pole surrounded by darkness signifies the soul of man which, though intended to govern the body, is without any power to attain truth unless guided by divine grace, but then it will emerge into the full light and attain the end for which it was created.

fearlessly enters this darkness will emerge into a clearly lighted plain, where he will find this springing fountain.

" We then asked him to tell us more about the Western region bordering our earth, of which he had spoken, and he gave us the following information :

" ' In the extreme West is an immense sea called in the Divine Revelation* " the miry sea," where the sun sets and along which stretches a desolate and sterile land, where the inhabitants never abide but are always passing away, and which is covered by thick darkness. Those who go there are exposed to every kind of illusion. The sun only gives a feeble light, the soil is completely barren, whatever is built there is soon destroyed again, conflict and strife perpetually rage there, whatever gets the upper hand tyrannises over those which were in power before it. There are found all kinds of animals and plants passing through strange developments.

" ' Now if you turn to the East† you will see a region where there is no human being, nor plant, nor tree,

*Koran, c. 18, v. 84. The " miry sea " indicates *Matter* stirred into life by the setting sun (Form), entering at every moment into union with some new form, birth and death and ebb and flow proceeding in ceaseless change.

†In the kingdom of *Form* at first nothing is found but the four elements mingled with each other, developed successively through mineral, vegetable and animal stages. After the last is found pure intellect struggling with powerful opponents, that is to say, the various human faculties. " The flying horn " signifies imaginative faculties ; " the marching horn " the passions, the fierce animal representing irascibility, and the gross one, concupiscence. " The flying horn," irregulated imagination, is in need of constant supervision by the human soul. The watchman is the perceptive faculty, which, gathering the various impressions of the five senses, conveys them to the King, the human soul.

nor animal ; it is an immense and empty plain. Crossing it, you will reach a mountainous region, where are clouds and strong winds and rapid rivers ; there are also gold and silver and precious stones, but no plants. From thence you will pass into a region where there are plants but no animals, then into another where there are animals but no men. Lastly you will arrive at a region where there are human beings such as are familiar to you.

" ' After passing the extreme limit of the East, you will see the sun rising between the two horns of Satan, " the flying horn " and " the marching horn." This latter is divided into two parts, one having the form of a fierce animal, the other of a gross one ; between these two composing the left horn is perpetual strife. As to " the flying horn," it has no one distinct form, but is composed of several, such as a winged man, a serpent with a swine's head, or merely a foot or an arm. The human soul which rules this region has established five ways of communication under the care of a watchman who takes whatever comes along them and passes it on to a treasurer who presents it to the King.

" ' The two horns continually attack the human soul, even to the point of driving it to madness. As to " the marching horn," the fierce animal of which it is partly composed lays a trap for man by embellishing in his eyes all his evil actions, murder, mutilation, oppression and destruction, by exciting his hatred and impelling him to violence and injustice ; while the other part in the shape of a gross animal continually attacks the human soul by casting a glamour over

vileness and foulness and urging her thereto ; nor does it cease its assaults till she is brought into complete subjection. It is seconded in its attacks by the spirits of the flying horn, which make man reject whatever he cannot see with his own eyes, whispering to him that there is no resurrection nor retribution nor spiritual Lord of the universe.

" ' Passing hence, we find a region inhabited by beings of angelic origin, free from the defects above-mentioned. They enter into communication with man, and contribute towards his spiritual progress. These are the intellectual faculties, which, though they are far below the pure Intelligences, have an instinctive desire to shake off the yoke of irascibility and concupiscence. Beyond this region is that of the angels, and further still, one directly governed by the Great King, and dwelt in by his faithful servants, who are engaged in fulfilling His commands. These are free from all evil inclination, whether to concupiscence or injustice or envy or idleness. To them is committed the defence of the frontier of this Kingdom, which they guard in person. Allotted to different parts, they occupy lofty forts constructed of crystal and precious stones, which surpass in durability all that may be found in the region of earth. They are immortal, and subject to no feebleness nor decay of force in discharging their duties.

" ' Beyond this region again are beings in immediate and continual relation with the supreme King, constantly occupied in His service, and never replaced by others. They are allowed to approach the Lord, to contemplate the throne of His Majesty and to adore Him, enjoying

the sight of Him continually and without intermission. They have the gentlest natures, great spiritual beauty, and a keen faculty of penetration and of arriving at the truth. To each has been assigned a distinct place and fixed rank, which can be shared by no one. Highest of all is that unique being, the nearest to the Lord, and the parent of all the rest, Active Intelligence* ; it is by his mediation that the word and commandment of the Lord go forth to all the other beings of creation.

" ' In this highest region all are pure spirits, having no relation to matter, except in so far as innate desire may set them in movement or cause them to move others. From such desire only, the Lord himself is absolutely exempt.

" ' Those who think that He had a beginning are in complete error, and those who think to describe Him fully are beside themselves. In relation to Him all description and comparison are impossible. Those who attempt to describe Him can only indicate the distance which separates Him from all human attributes ; the beauty of being is represented in scriptural language by His Face and His infinite bounty by His Hand. If even one of the cherubims wished to contemplate His essence, he would be dazzled and frustrated by His glory. Since beauty is the veil of beauty, His manifestation must always remain a mystery, in the same way as the sun, when lightly obscured by a cloud allows its disc to be seen, but when it blazes forth in all its splendour, its disc is veiled from human eye by excess of light. The Lord, however, is always communicating His splendour to His creation without

*c.f. the Logos of Philo.

grudging or reserve; He imparts Himself generously and the plenitude of His bounty is without limit: He who has the least glimpse of His beauty remains entranced by it for ever; sometimes saints of extraordinary attainments who have given themselves up to Him and have been favoured by His grace, aware of the worthlessness of the perishable world, when, from their ecstatic state they return to it, are haunted for the rest of their lives by regret and sadness.'

"Here Hay ibn Yokdhan closed his discourse by adding:

"'If I had not, in thus addressing you, been acting in obedience to the commands of my Lord, I would rather have left you for Him. If you will, accompany me on the path of safety.'"

Thus concludes this brief allegory, which, like Avicenna's other mystical treatises, is concerned with the progress and development of the human soul. According to him, the soul is created for eternity, and the object of its union with the body is the formation of a spiritual and independent microcosm. During our earthly life we have but a dim presentiment of this future condition; this presentiment produces in different characters a lesser or greater desire for it, and the thoroughness of our preparation depends on this desire. This preparation is only accomplished by the development of the highest faculties of the soul, and the inferior faculties of the senses furnish the indispensable basis for this.

Every human faculty has some pleasure corresponding to it. The pleasure of the appetitive faculty for ex-

ample, is to receive a sensation which accords with its desire ; the pleasure of the irascible faculty is attack ; the pleasure of the surmising faculty, hope ; that of the recollective faculty, memory. Generally speaking, the pleasures attending these faculties consist in their realising themselves in action, but they differ widely in rank, the soul's delight in intellectual perception of realities, in which the knower and the known are one, being incomparably higher than any mere sensual satisfaction. By attaining to such perceptions, the soul prepares itself for the beatitude of the next life. The degree of this beatitude will correspond to the intensity of spiritual desire awakened in it during its earthly sojourn.*

It is extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to determine the degrees of beatitude of the soul after death. We may, nevertheless, understand that the various impediments of passions, prejudices, etc., to which its union with the body has given rise, are not immediately dissolved on its separation from the body. Souls thus hindered may pass into a state depicted by Plato and other ancient philosophers, in which they are still weighed down by the passions they indulged in. Every soul is eternal and imperishable, and will finally attain the beatitude for which it was created. But it may be punished after death by a shorter or longer exclusion from that beatitude. To suppose with Alexander Aphrodisius that an imperfect or ill-prepared soul may be annihilated, would be to admit a belief at complete variance with its eternal essence and origin.

*c.f. Lowell " Perhaps the *longing* to be so,
Helps make the soul immortal."

But we may well conjecture that the punishment of such ill-prepared and refractory souls would consist in their being in a state in which after separation from the body they still pine after sensual enjoyments and suffer from the impossibility of such gratification.

It may also be supposed that such ill-prepared souls remember the notions that were current in this world regarding beatitude and damnation; their conceptions would in that case resemble dreams which are often more vivid than impressions received in waking moments. They would imagine themselves undergoing the examination in the tomb and all the other punishments depicted in the Koran, or it may be enjoying the sensual pleasures there described. On the other hand, the noble and well-prepared soul will pass at once to the contemplation of the eternal, and will be exempt from every memory and every conception relating to this world. For if anything of this kind remained in it as a reminder of its union with the body, it would so far fall short of the plenitude of its perfection.

Besides his mystical treatise "On the soul," Avicenna has left a short but remarkable poem on the same subject, which runs as follows:—

"THE SOUL.

"It descended upon thee from the lofty station (heaven); a dove rare and uncaptured, curtained from the eyes of every knower yet which is manifest and never wore a veil.* It came to thee unwillingly and it may

*The existence of the soul, though not manifest to the senses, is yet too manifest to leave any doubt.

perhaps be unwilling to abandon thee although it complain of its sufferings. It resisted at first, and would not become familiar, but when it was in friendly union with the body, it grew accustomed to the desert waste (the world). Methinks it then forgot the recollections of the protected park (heaven), and of those abodes which it left with regret ; but when in its spiral descent it arrived at the centre of its circle in the terrestrial world, it was united to the infirmity of the material body and remained among the monuments and prostrate ruins. It now remembers the protected park and weepeth with tears which flow and cease not till the time for setting out towards the protected park approacheth ; till the instant of departure for the vast plain (the spiritual world) draweth nigh. It then cooeth on the top of a lofty pinnacle (for knowledge can exalt all who were not exalted) and it has come to the knowledge of every mystery in the universe, while yet its tattered vest hath not been mended.*

" Its descent was predestined so that it might hear what it had not heard, else why did it descend from the high and lofty heaven to the depth of the low and humble earth ? If God sent it down by a decision of His will, His motive is concealed from the intelligence of man. Why did it descend to be withheld from the exalted summit of heaven by the coarse net of the body, and to be detained in a cage ? It is like a flash of lightning shining over the meadow, and disappearing as if it had never gleamed."

*The tattered vest of the soul or the body destroyed by death is not mended till the day of resurrection ; and yet the soul is in heaven and in the enjoyment of all knowledge.

Although Avicenna's reputation in the Muhammedan world has always been high, his mystical treatises have generally been regarded as heretical, and many have only been preserved in Hebrew translations. He himself says explicitly that he only intended them for his most intimate disciples, and forbade them to be communicated to the multitude. For his own part, he conformed to the religious law and customs. The celebrated contemporary Sufi Abou Said Abi'l Khair having asked his opinion regarding the custom of praying for the dead, and visiting their tombs, he answers thus :

" God the Unique Being and Source of all that exists—angels, intelligences exempt from connection with matter, souls united to matter, elements in all their varied developments—animal, vegetable and mineral, inspires His whole creation, and His omniscience embraces all. His influence in the first place acts immediately on the Active Intelligences and angels, who in their turn act on souls which in their turn act on our sublunary world. If there were not homogeneity of substance between celestial and terrestrial souls and likeness between the macrocosm of the universe, and the microcosm of man, the knowledge of God would be impossible for us, as the Prophet himself hath said, ' He who knows himself, knows God.' All creation, whose parts are linked together, is subject to influences which all derive from a single source—God. Terrestrial souls differ widely in rank ; the highest are endowed with gifts of prophecy, and perfected so far that they attain the sphere of pure intelligence. A soul of this kind entering after death into eternal beatitude,

shared with its peers, continues along with them to exercise a certain influence on terrestrial souls. The object of prayer for the dead and visiting their tombs is to beg for the help of those pure souls, a help which is realised sometimes in a material, sometimes in a spiritual way. The former kind of help may be compared with the direction which the body receives from the brain; spiritual assistance is realised by the purification of the mind from every thought but that of God."

Avicenna, after his liberation from imprisonment by Ala-ed-Dowla, being anxious to quit Hamadan, left the city secretly with his brother, his disciple Joujani and two servants, all five disguised as Sufis. After a painful journey they reached Ispahan, where they were received in a friendly manner by Ala-ed-Dowla. Avicenna here continued to hold philosophical discussions as he had done at Hamadan. At Ispahan he also composed two of his most important works, the "Shifa" and the "Najat," treating of medicine. Later on he followed Ala-ed-Dowla to Bagdad, but on the way was seized with a gastric malady, accompanied by an attack of apoplexy. He recovered at the time, but not long afterwards the sickness returned, and he died at the age of 57, A.D. 1037.

In his Literary History of Persia (vo. ii., p. 108) Professor Browne points out that one of the most celebrated stanzas in Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam was really composed by Avicenna:—

> "Up from earth's centre through the Seventh Gate
> I rose, and on the throne of Saturn sate,
> And many a knot unravelled by the road,
> But not the master-knot of human fate."

Another interesting link between the two philosophers is supplied by the fact, mentioned by Professor Browne, that a few days before his death Omar Khayyam was reading in the " Shifa " of Avicenna the chapter treating of the One and of the Many.

CHAPTER XI

AL GHAZZALI
(A D 1058—1111)

AL GHAZZALI is one of the deepest thinkers, greatest theologians and profoundest moralists of Islam. In all Muhammadan lands he is celebrated both as an apologist of orthodoxy and a warm advocate of Sufi mysticism. Intimately acquainted with all the learning of his time, he was not only one of the numerous oriental philosophers who traverse every sphere of intellectual activity, but one of those rarer minds whose originality is not crushed by their learning. He was imbued with a sacred enthusiasm for the triumph of his faith, and his whole life was dedicated to one purpose—the defence of Islam. As Browning says, "he made life consist of one idea." His full name was Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmed Algazzali, and he was born at Tus in Khorassan, 1058 A.D., where a generation earlier Firdausi, the author of the Shah-nama, had died. Tus was already famous for learning and culture, and later on Ghazzali's own fame caused the town to become a centre of pilgrimage for pious Moslems, till it was laid in ruins by Genghis Khan, a century after Ghazzali's death.

His birth occurred at a time when the power of the Caliphs had been long on the wane, and the Turkish

militia, like the Pretorian guards of the later Roman empire, were the real dispensers of power. While the political unity of Islam had been broken up into a number of mutually-opposed states, Islam itself was threatened by dangers from without. In Spain, Alphonso II. had begun to press the Moors hardly. Before Ghazzali was forty, Peter the Hermit was preaching the First Crusade, and during his lifetime Baldwin of Bouillon was proclaimed King in the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem. But more serious than these outer foes was the great schism which had split Islam into the two great opposing parties of Shiahs and Sunnis—a schism which was embittered and complicated by the struggle of rival dynasties for power. While the Shiites prevailed in Egypt and Persia, the Turks and Seljuks were Sunnis. In Bagdad the seat of the Caliphate during the reign of Al Kasim, when Ghazzali was a youth, fatal encounters between the two contending factions were of daily occurrence. Ghazzali's native city was Shiite, and not till Khorassan had been conquered by the Ghaznevides and Seljuks did Sunni teaching prevail there. Yet, however bitterly Shiahs and Sunnis might be opposed to each other, they both counted as orthodox and were agreed as to the fundamental principles of Islam, nor did their strife endanger the religion itself. But besides the two great parties of Shiahs and Sunnis, a mass of heretical sects, classed under the common name of Mutazilites, had sprung up within Islam. These heretics had studied Aristotle and Greek philosophy in Arabic translations, and for a long time all that the orthodox could do was to thunder anathemas at them and denounce all speculation. But

at last Al Asha'ari, himself formerly a Mutazilite, renounced his heresies, and sought to defend orthodoxy and confute the heretics on philosophical grounds.

The Mutazilites had cultivated the study of philosophy with especial zeal, and therefore the struggle with them was a fierce one, complicated as it was by political animosity. The most dangerous sect of all was that of the Ismailians and Assassins, with their doctrine of a hidden Imam or leader. In some of his works Ghazzali gives special attention to confuting these.

The whole aspect and condition of Islam during Ghazzali's lifetime was such as to cause a devout Moslem deep distress and anxiety. It is therefore natural that a man who, after long and earnest search, had found rest and peace in Islam, should have bent all the energies of his enthusiastic character to oppose these destructive forces to the utmost. Ghazzali is never weary of exhorting those who have no faith to study the Muhammadan revelation ; he defends religion in a philosophical way against the philosophers, refutes the heretics, chides the laxity of the Shiites, defends the austere principles of the Schafiites, champions orthodoxy, and finally, by word and example, urges his readers towards the mysticism and asceticism of the Sufis. His numerous writings are all directed to one or another of these objects. As a recognition of his endeavours, the Muhammadan Church has conferred upon him the title of " Hujjat al Islam," " the witness of Islam."

It is a fact worthy of notice that when the power of the Caliphs was shattered and Muhammadanism, already in a state of decline, precisely at that period theology and all other sciences were flourishing.

The reason of this may be found in the fact that nearly all the Muhammadan dynasties, however much they might be opposed to each other, zealously favoured literature and science. Besides this, the more earnest spirits, weary of the political confusions of the time, devoted themselves all the more fervently to cultivating the inner life, in which they sought compensation and refuge from outward distractions. Ghazzali was the most striking figure among all these. Of his early history not much is known. His father is said to have died while he was a child, but he had a brother Abu'l Futuh Ahmed Alghazzali, who was in great favour with the Sultan Malik Shah, and owing to his zeal for Islam had won the title of " Glory of the Faith." From the similarity of their pursuits we gather that the relationship between the brothers must have been a close one. Ibn Khalliqan the historian informs us that later on Abu'l Futuh succeeded his brother as professor, and abridged his most important literary work, " The Revival of the religious sciences." While still a youth, Ghazzali studied theology at Jorjan under the Imam Abu Nasr Ismail. On his return journey from Jorjan to Tus, he is said to have fallen into the hands of robbers. They took from him all that he had, but at his earnest entreaty returned to him his note books, at the same time telling him that he could know nothing really, if he could be so easily deprived of his knowledge. This made him resolve for the future to learn everything by heart.

Later on Ghazzali studied at Nishapur under the celebrated Abu'l-Maali. Here also at the court of the Vizier Nizam-ul-mulk (the school-fellow of Omar Khay-

yam) he took a distinguished part in those discussions on poetry and philosophy which were so popular in the East. In 1091 Nizam-ul-mulk appointed him to the professorship of Jurisprudence in the Nizamiya College at Bagdad, which he had founded twenty-four years previously. Here Ghazzali lectured to a class of 300 students. In his leisure hours, as he informs us in his brief autobiography, "Al munkidh min uddallal" ("The Deliverance from error") he busied himself with the study of philosophy. He also received a commission from the Caliph to refute the doctrine of the Ismailians.

In the first chapter it has been mentioned how a deep-seated unrest and thirst for peace led him, after many mental struggles, to throw up his appointment and betake himself to religious seclusion at Damascus and Jerusalem. This, together with his pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, lasted nearly ten years. Ibn Khalliqan informs us that he also went to Egypt and stayed some time in Alexandria. Here the fame of the Almoravide leader in Spain, Yusuf ibn Tashifin, is said to have reached Ghazzali, and to have made him think of journeying thither. This prince had begun those campaigns in Spain against the Cid and other Christian leaders which were destined to add Andalusia to his Moroccan dominions. By these victories in the West he had to some extent retrieved the decline of Islam in the East. It is natural to suppose that the enthusiastic Ghazzali would gladly have met with this champion of Muhammadanism. The news of Yusuf ibn Tashifin's death in 1106 seems to have made him renounce his intention of proceeding to Spain.

The realisation of Ghazzali's wish to withdraw from public affairs and give himself to a contemplative life was now interrupted. The requests of his children and other family affairs, of which we have no exact information, caused him to return home. Besides this, the continued progress of the Ismailians, the spread of irreligious doctrines, and the increasing religious indifference of the masses not only filled Ghazzali and his Sufi friends with profound grief but determined them to stem the evil with the whole force of their philosophy, the ardour of vital conviction, and the authority of noble example.

In addition, the governor of Nishapur, Muhammad Ibn Malikshah, had asked Ghazzali to proceed thither in order to help to bring about a religious revival. Thus, after an absence of ten years, he returned to Nishapur to resume his post as teacher. But his activity at this period was directed to a different aim than that of the former one. Regarding the contrast he speaks like a Muhammadan Thomas á Kempis. Formerly, he says, he taught a knowledge which won him fame and glory, but now he taught a knowledge which brought just the opposite. Inspired with an earnest desire for the spiritual progress of his co-religionists and himself, and convinced that he was called to this task by God, he prays the Almighty to lead and enlighten him, so that he may do the same for others.

How long Ghazzali occupied his professorship at Nishapur the second time is not precisely clear. Only five or six years of his life remained, and towards the close he again resigned his post to give himself up to a life of contemplation to which he felt irresistibly drawn,

in his native city of Tus. Here he spent the rest of days in devotional exercises in friendly intercourses with other Sufis and in religious instruction of the young. He died, devout as he lived, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, A.D. 1111. He founded a convent for Sufis and a professorship of jurisprudence.

Ghazzali's activity as an author during his relatively short life was enormous. According to the literary historians, he is the author of ninety-nine different works. These are not all known to us, but there are existing in the West a considerable quantity of them, some in Latin and Hebrew translations, as he was much studied by the Jews in the Middle Ages. A writer in the Jewish Encyclopædia says (*sub. voc.*), "From his 'Makasid-al-Falasifah' in which he expounded logic, physics and metaphysics according to Aristotle, many a Jewish student of philosophy derived much accurate information. It was not, however, through his attacks on philosophy that Ghazzali's authority was established among Jewish thinkers of the middle ages, but through the ethical teachings in his theological works. He approached the ethical idea of Judaism to such an extent that some supposed him to be actually drifting in that direction."

Although Ghazzali was a Persian, both by race and birthplace, most of his works are composed in Arabic, that language being as familiar to Muhammadan theologians as Latin to those of Europe in the Middle Ages. One of his most important works is the "Tahafut al falasifah," "Destruction of the Philosophers," which the great Averroes endeavoured to refute. Somewhat in the style of Mr. Balfour's "Defence of philo-

sophic doubt," Ghazzali attempts to erect his religious system on a basis of scepticism. He denies causation as thoroughly as Hume, but asserts that the divine mind has ordained that certain phenomena shall always occur in a certain order, and that philosophy without faith is powerless to discover God. Although chiefly famous in the West as a philosopher, he himself would probably have repudiated the title. He tells us that his object in studying philosophy was to confute the philosophers. His true element was not philosophy but religion, with which his whole being was penetrated, and which met all his spiritual needs. Even in his most heterogeneous studies he always kept before him one aim —the confirmation, spread, and glorification of Islam.

It is true that more than one of his contemporaries accused him of hypocrisy, saying that he had an esoteric doctrine for himself and his private circle of friends, and an exoteric for the vulgar. His Sufistic leanings might lend some colour to this accusation, it being a well-known Sufi habit to cloak their teaching under a metaphorical veil, wine representing the love of God, etc., as in Hafiz and Omar Khayyam. Against this must be set the fact that in his autobiography written near the close of his life, he constantly refers to his former works, which he would hardly have done had he been conscious of any striking discrepancy between his earlier and his later teaching. There is no reason to doubt his previously-quoted statement that he " studied philosophy in order to refute the philosophers."

He was, at any rate, intensely indignant at having his orthodoxy impugned, as appears from a striking story narrated by the Arabic historian Abu'l Feda.

He tells us that Ghazzali's most important work, "The revival of the religious sciences" had created a great sensation when it reached Cordova. The Muhammadan theologians of Spain were rigidly orthodox, and accused the work of being tainted by heresy. They represented to the Caliph Ali Ibn Yusuf that not only this but all Ghazzali's other works which circulated in Andalusia should be collected and burnt, which was accordingly done. Not long after, a young Berber from North Africa named Ibn Tumart wandered to Bagdad, where he attended Ghazzali's lectures. Ghazzali noticing the foreigner, accosted him, and inquired regarding religious affairs in the West, and how his works had been received there. To his horror he learned that they had been condemned as heretical and committed to the flames by order ot the Almoravide Caliph Ali. Upon this, Ghazzali, raising his hands towards heaven, exclaimed in a voice shaken with emotion, "O God, destroy his kingdom as he has destroyed my books, and take all power from him." Ibn Tumart, in sympathy with his teacher, said, "O Imam* Ghazzali, pray that thy wish may be accomplished by my means." And so it happened. Ibn Tumart returned to his North African, proclaimed himself a Mahdi, gained a large following among the Berbers, and overthrew Ali and the dynasty of the Almoravides. This story is not entirely beyond doubt, but shows the importance attached by Ghazzali's contemporaries to his influence and teaching.

As an example of Ghazzali's ethical earnestness, we may quote the following from his Ihya-ul-ulum

*Imam, *i.e.* leader.

(" Revival of the religious sciences "). He refers to the habit common to all Muhammadans of ejaculating, " We take refuge in God." " By the fear of God," he says, " I do not mean a fear like that of women when their eyes swim and their hearts beat at hearing some eloquent religious discourse, which they quickly forget and turn again to frivolity. There is no real fear at all. He who fears a thing flees from it, and he who hopes for a thing strives for it, and the only fear that will save thee is the fear that forbids sinning against God and instils obedience to Him. Beware of the shallow fear of women and fools, who, when they hear of the terrors of the Lord, say lightly, ' We take refuge in God,' and at the same time continue in the very sins which will destroy them. Satan laughs at such pious ejaculations. They are like a man who should meet a lion in a desert, while there is a fortress at no great distance away, and when he sees the ravenous beast, should stand exclaiming, ' I take refuge in that fortress,' without moving a step towards it. What will such an ejaculation profit him? In the same way, merely ejaculating ' I take refuge in God ' will not protect thee from the terrors of His judgment unless thou really take refuge in Him."

Ghazzali's moral earnestness is equally apparent in the following extract from his work " Munqidh min uddallal " " The Deliverance from error," in which he sets himself to combat the general laxity and heretical tendencies of his time :—

" Man is composed of a body and a heart ; by the word ' heart ' I understand that spiritual part of him which is the seat of the knowledge of God, and not

the material organ of flesh and blood which he possesses in common with the animals. Just as the body flourishes in health and decays in disease, so the heart is either spiritually sound or the prey of a malady which ends in death.

"Now ignorance of God is a deadly poison, and the revolt of the passions is a disease for which the knowledge of God and obedience to Him, manifested in self-control, are the only antidote and remedy. Just as remedies for the body are only known to physicians who have studied their secret properties, so the remedies for the soul are devotional practices as defined by the prophets, the effects of which transcend reason.

"The proper work of reason is to confess the truth of inspiration and its own impotence to grasp what is only revealed to the prophets; reason takes us by the hand and hands us over to the prophets, as blind men commit themselves to their guides, or as the desperately sick to their physicians. Such are the range and limits of reason; beyond prophetic truth it cannot take a step.

"The causes of the general religious languor and decay of faith in our time are chiefly to be traced to four classes of people: (1) Philosophers, (2) Sufis, (3) Ismailians*, (4) the Ulema or scholastic theologians. I have specially interrogated those who were lax in their religion; I have questioned them concerning their doubts, and spoken to them in these terms: 'Why are you so lukewarm in your religion? If you really believe in a future life, and instead of preparing for it sell it in exchange for the goods of this world, you must

*A sect which declared the impossibility of arriving at truth except through an "Imam" or infallible guide.

be mad. You would not give two things for one of the same quality; how can you barter eternity for days which are numbered? If you do not believe, you are infidels, and should seek to obtain faith.'

"In answer to such appeals, I have heard men say, 'If the observance of religious practices is obligatory, it is certainly obligatory on the Ulemâ or theologians. And what do we find amongst the most conspicuous of these? One does not pray, another drinks wine, a third devours the orphans' inheritance, and a fourth lets himself be bribed into giving wrong decisions, and so forth.'

"Another man giving himself out as a Sufi said that he had attained to such a high pitch of proficiency in Sufism that for him religious practice was no longer necessary. An Ismailian said, 'Truth is very difficult to find, and the road to it is strewn with obstacles; so-called proofs are mutually contradictory, and the speculations of philosophers cannot be trusted. But we have an Imam (leader) who is an infallible judge and needs no proofs. Why should we abandon truth for error?' A fifth said, 'I have studied the subject, and what you call inspiration is really a high degree of sagacity. Religion is intended as a restraint on the passions of the vulgar. But I, who do not belong to the common herd, what have I to do with such stringent obligations? I am a philosopher; science is my guide, and dispenses me from submission to authority.'

"This last is the fate of philosophic theists, as we find it expressed in the writings of Avicenna and Farabi. It is no rare thing to find men who read the Koran, attend public worship at the mosque, and outwardly

profess the greatest respect for the religious law, in private indulging in the use of wine and committing other shameful actions. If we ask such men how it comes that although they do not believe in the reality of inspiration, they attend public worship, they say that they practise it as a useful exercise and as a safeguard for their fortunes and families. If we further ask them why they drink wine, which is absolutely prohibited in the Koran, they say, " The only object of the prohibition of wine was to prevent quarrelling and violence. Wise men like ourselves are in no danger of such excesses, and we drink in order to brighten and kindle our imaginative powers.'

" Such is the faith of these pretended Moslems and their example has led many astray who have been all the more encouraged to follow these philosophers because their opponents have often been incompetent."

In the above extracts Ghazzali appears as a reformer, and it would not be difficult to find modern parallels for the tendencies which he describes. Professor D. B. Macdonald compares him to Ritschl in the stress which he lays on personal religious experience, and in his suspicion of the intrusion of metaphysics into the domain of religion. Although intensely in earnest, he was diffident of his powers as a preacher, and in a surviving letter says, " I do not think myself worthy to preach ; for preaching is like a tax, and the property on which it is imposed is the acceptance of preaching to oneself. He then who has no property, how shall he pay the tax ? and he who lacks a garment how shall he cover another ? and ' When is the stick crooked and the shadow straight ? ' And God revealed to Jesus (upon

whom be peace). Preach to thyself, then if thou acceptest the preaching, preach to mankind, and if not, be ashamed before Me."*

Like other preachers of righteousness, Ghazzali strove to rouse men out of lethargy by laying stress on the terrors of the world to come and the Judgment Day. He was not one of those who think fear too base a motive to appeal to; he strikes the note of warning again and again. Towards the close of his life he composed a short work on eschatology "Al Durra al Fakhirah" ("The precious pearl") of a sufficiently lurid character. In it he says: "When you watch a dead man and see that the saliva has run from his mouth, that his lips are contracted, his face black, the whites of his eyes showing, know that he is damned, and that the fact of his damnation in the other world has just been revealed to him. But if you see the dead with a smile on his lips, a serene countenance, his eyes half-closed, know that he has just received the good news of the happiness which awaits him in the other life.

"On the Day of Judgment, when all men are gathered before the throne of God, their accounts are all cast up, and their good and evil deeds weighed. During all this time each man believes he is the only one with whom God is dealing. Though peradventure at the same moment God is taking account of countless multitudes whose number is known to Him only. Men do not see each other, nor hear each other speak."

Regarding faith, Ghazzali says in the Ihya-ul-ulum:

"Faith consists of two elements, patience and gratitude. Both are graces bestowed by God, and

*D. B. Macdonald "Life of Ghazzali."

there is no way to God except faith. The Koran expounds the excellence of patience in more than seventy passages. The Caliph Ali said, 'Patience bears the same relation to faith as the head does to the body. He who has no head, has no body, and he who has no patience has no faith.'"

Ghazzali's philosophy is the re-action of his intensely religious personality against the naturalistic tendencies of men like Avicenna and Averroes. They believed in the eternity of matter, and reduced God to a bare First Cause. He also, though sympathising with the Sufis, especially on the side of their asceticism, was opposed to Sufistic Pantheism. He conceived God chiefly as an active Will, and not merely as the Self existent.

While his contemporaries were busying themselves with metaphysical theories concerning matter and creation, Ghazzali laid stress on self-observation and self-knowledge ("He who knows himself, knows God"). As St. Augustine found deliverance from doubt and error in his inward experience of God, and Descartes in self-consciousness, so Ghazzali, unsatisfied with speculation and troubled by scepticism, surrenders himself to the will of God. Leaving others to demonstrate the existence of God from the external world, he finds God revealed in the depths of his own consciousness and the mystery of his own free will.

He fared as innovators in religion and philosophy always do, and was looked upon during his lifetime as a heretic. He admits himself that his "Destruction of the philosophers" was written to expose their mutual contradictions. But he has no mere Mephistophelic

pleasure in destruction; he pulls down in order to erect. He is not a mere sceptic on the one hand, nor a bigoted theologian on the other, and his verdict on the Mutazilite heretics of his day is especially mild. Acute thinker though he was, in him will and feeling predominated over thought. He rejected the dogmatic and philosophic systems of his contemporaries as mere jejune skeletons of reality, and devoted the close of his life to study of the traditions and the Koran.

Like Augustine, he finds in God-derived self-consciousness the starting-point for the thought, and like him emphasizes the fundamental significance of the will. He sees everywhere the Divine Will at work in what philosophers call natural causes. He seeks the truth, but seeks it with a certain consciousness of possessing it already within himself.

He is a unique and lonely figure in Islam, and has to this day been only partially understood. In the Middle Ages his fame was eclipsed by that of Averroes, whose commentary on Aristotle is alluded to by Dante, and was studied by Thomas Aquinas and the schoolmen. Averroes' system was rounded and complete, but Ghazzali was one of those "whose reach exceeds their grasp"; he was always striking after something he had not attained, and stands in many respects nearer to the modern mind than Averroes. Renan, though far from sympathising with his religious earnestness, calls him "the most original mind among Arabian philosophers," and De Boer says, "Men like Ghazzali have for philosophy this significance that they are a problem alike for themselves and for philosophy, because they are a fragment of spiritual reality that requires

explanation. By the force of their personality they remove what hinders them in the construction of their systems without troubling about correctness. Later thinkers make it their business to explain the impulses that guide such men both in their work of destruction and of restoration. Original minds like his supply food for reflection to future generations."

CHAPTER XII.

FARIDUDDIN ATTAR
(A D 1119—1229)

FARIDUDDIN ATTAR was born in the village of Kerken near Nishapur in Khorassan, A.D. 1119 under the Sultan Sandjar. Some years after his birth his father removed to Schadbakh, where he kept a druggist's shop. On his father's death, Fariduddin carried on the business, whence he received his cognomen Attar (druggist). His call to the religious life was as follows: One day while he was seated in his shop surrounded by servants busily attending to his orders, a wandering dervish paused at the door and regarded him silently, while his eyes slowly filled with tears. Attar sharply told him to be off about his business. "That is easily done," replied the dervish; "I have only a light bundle to carry, nothing in fact but my clothes. But you with your sacks full of valuable drugs, when the time comes to go, what will *you* do? Had you not better consider a little?" The appeal went home. He promptly abandoned his business in order to devote himself to a religious life. Bidding a decisive adieu to the world, he betook himself to a Sufi convent, presided over by Sheikh Ruknuddin. Here he resided for some time engaged in devotional practices, and then made the pilgrimage to Mecca, where he met with many devotees

and conceived the idea of compiling a collection of stories of the holy men of Islam. To this work he devoted several years of his long life; he also composed a Pand-nama or "Book of Counsels." But the work by which he is chiefly known is the "Mantiquttair" or "Parliament of Birds," and of this we proceed to give some account.

In this allegorical poem various birds representing mystics, unite themselves under the leadership of the hoopoe in order to journey to the court of the Simurgh, a mysterious bird whose name signifies "thirty birds," dwelling in Mount Kaf, the mountain which encircles the world. At the commencement of the poem there is a long debate between the hoopoe and the other birds, who at first allege various excuses for not undertaking the journey, while he rebukes them for their lukewarmness, not concealing, however, the fact that the journey is full of peril, and that though many start few will reach the goal. The hoopoe's description of the road is as follows: "We have seven valleys to traverse.* The first is the Valley of Search; the second the Valley of Love, which has no limits; the third is the Valley of Knowledge; the fourth is the Valley of Independence; the fifth is the Valley of Unity, pure and simple; the sixth is the Valley of Amazement; last of all is the valley of Poverty and Annihilation, beyond which there is no advance. There thou wilt feel thyself drawn, but will have no power to go any further.

"(1) When thou enterest the Valley of Search, at every step new trials will present themselves; there

*i.e.: The stages of the Sufi's progress to God.

the parrot of the celestial sphere is as mute as a fly. There thou must cast away all thy possessions and imperil all thy riches. Not only must the hand be empty, but thy heart must be detached from all that is earthly. Then the Light of the Divine Essence will begin to cast upon thee some rays.

" (2) In order to enter the second valley (of love) thou must be made all of fire ; he who is not composed of fire will find no pleasure in that valley ; he must not think of the future, but be ready to sacrifice a hundred worlds to the flames, if needs be. Faith and infidelity, good and evil, religion and irreligion, are all one for him who has arrived at the second stage ; for where love reigns, none of them exist any more.

" (3) In the third valley (of knowledge) the progress of the pilgrims is in proportion to their innate powers. In the path traversed by Abraham the Friend of God, can a feeble spider keep pace with an elephant ? Let the gnat fly as hard as he may, he will never keep up with the wind. Thus the degrees of knowledge attained to by the initiated are different ; one only reaches the entrance of the temple, while another finds the Divinity who dwells in it. When the Sun of Knowledge darts its rays, each is illumined in proportion to his capacity, and finds in the contemplation of the truth the rank which belongs to him. He sees a path lie open before him through the midst of the fire, the furnace of the world becomes for him a garden of roses. He perceives the almond within the shell, that is to say, he sees God under the veil of all apparent things. But for one happy man who penetrates into these mysteries, how many millions have gone astray ? Only the

perfect can dive with success into the depths of this ocean.

" (4) In the fourth valley (of independence) thou hast done with everything but God. Out of this disposition of mind, which no longer feels the need of anything, there rises a tempestuous hurricane, every blast of which annihilates whole kingdoms. The seven seas are then no more than a pool of water ; the seven planets are a spark ; the eight paradises are only a single curtain ; the seven hells a mass of ice. In less time than it takes the greedy crow to fill its crop, out of a hundred caravans of travellers there remains not one alive.

" (5) The Valley of Unity which succeeds to that of Independence, is the valley of privation of all things and reduction to unity, that is to say, the attainment of a degree of spirituality, in which the Divine Essence, apart from every attribute, is the object of contemplation.

" (6) In the sixth valley, that of Amazement, the pilgrim's lot is to suffer and to groan ; each breath he draws is like a sword ; his days and nights are passed in sighs ; from each of his hairs distils a drop of blood, which, as it falls, traces in the air the letters of the word " alas ! " There he remains in a state of stupefaction, and finds his way no more."

To make the meaning of " Amazement " clearer, Attar gives the following allegory. He supposes that the young companions of a princess wished one day to amuse themselves at the expense of a slave. They made him drink wine in which they had dropped a narcotic drug, and when he was asleep had him carried

to the harem. At midnight, when he woke, he found himself on a gilded couch surrounded by perfumed candles, scent-boxes of aloes, and lovely women whose songs ravished his ear. "Disconcerted and stupefied," says the poet, "he no longer retained reason nor life. He was no longer in this world, nor was he in the other. His heart was full of love for the princess, but his tongue remained mute. His spirit was in ecstacies. When he awoke in the morning he found himself again a slave at his old post. The memory of the past night was so vivid that it caused him to utter a cry; he tore his garments, and threw dust upon his head. They asked him what was the matter, but he knew not what to reply. He could not say whether what he had seen was a dream or a reality; whether he had passed the night in drunkenness or in full possession of his faculties. What he had seen had left a profound impression on his mind, and yet he could not trace it out accurately. He had contemplated Beauty beyond all words, and yet he was not sure whether he had seen It after all. The only effect of his vision was a trouble of mind and uncertainty."

(7) At last comes the seventh valley, that of Poverty and Annihilation. "But these words are insufficient to describe it; forgetfulness, deafness, dumbness, fainting—such is the condition of the pilgrim in this valley. One sun causes millions of shadows to vanish. When the ocean is agitated, how can the figures traced on its waters remain? Such figures are this world and the world to come, and he who knows them to be nothing is right. He who is plunged in this sea, where the heart is astray and lost, has by means of his very

annihilation found immutable repose. In this ocean, where reigns a constant calm, the heart finds nought but annihilation."

Attar also illustrates the Sufi doctrine of annihilation (which resembles the Buddhistic nirvana) by an allegory. "One night," he says, "the butterflies were tormented by the desire to unite themselves with the candle-flame. They held a meeting, and resolved that one of them should go and experiment, and bring back news. A butterfly was sent to a neighbouring house, and he perceived the flame of the candle which was burning within. He brought back word and tried to describe the flame according to the measure of his intelligence; but the butterfly who presided over the assembly said that the exploring butterfly had attained no real knowledge of the candle-flame. A second butterfly went forth, and approached so close to the flame as to singe his wings. He also returned, and threw a little light on the mystery of union with the flame. But the presiding butterfly found his explanation not much more satisfactory than the preceding one.

"A third butterfly then flew forth; he was intoxicated with love for the flame, and flung himself wholly into it; he lost himself, and identified himself with it. It embraced him completely, and his body became as fiery-red as the flame itself. When the presiding butterfly saw from afar that the flame had absorbed the devoted butterfly and communicated its own qualities to it; 'That butterfly,' he exclaimed, 'has learnt what he wished to know, but he alone understands it. Only he who has lost all trace and token of his own

existence knows what annihilation is. Until thou ignorest thyself, body and soul, thou canst not know the object which deserves thy love.' "

The foregoing terrible description of the seven mysterious valleys was well calculated to discourage the birds, and Attar tells us that after hearing it they stood with hearts oppressed and heads bent. " All understood," he says, " that it was not for a feeble hand to bend this bow. They were so terrified by the discourse of the hoopoe that a great number died on the spot where they were assembled. As to the others, in spite of their dismay, they consented to commence the journey. During long years they travelled over hill and dale, and spent a great part of their lives in pilgrimage.

" Finally, of all who set out, a very small band arrived at the goal. Some were drowned in the ocean, others were annihilated and disappeared. Others perished on the peaks of high mountains, devoured by thirst and a prey to all kinds of ills.* Others had their plumes burnt and their hearts dried up by the scorching heat of the sun ; others fell a prey to the wild beasts which haunted the road, falling panic-struck, without resistance, into their claws ; others died of sheer exhaustion in the desert ; others fought and killed each other madly for chance grains of corn ; others experienced all kinds of pains and fatigues, and ended by stopping short of the goal ; others, engrossed in curiosity and

*c.f. G. Meredith " Out of hundreds who aspire.
Eighties perish, nineties tire ;
Those who bear up in spite of wrecks and wracks,
Were seasoned by celestial blows and thwacks."

pleasure, perished without thinking of the object for which they had set out.

"When they started, their numbers were countless, but at last only thirty arrived, and these without feathers and wings, exhausted and prostrated, their hearts broken, their souls fainting, their bodies worn out by fatigue. They had arrived at the Palace of the Simurgh. A chamberlain of the King, who saw these thirty hapless birds without feathers or wings, questioned them whence they came, and why. 'We have come,' they answered, 'that the Simurgh may become our king. The love that we feel for him has unsettled our reason. We have denied ourselves all rest to follow the road that leads to Him. It is very long since we started, and of our many millions, only thirty have reached the goal. The hope of appearing here has buoyed us up hitherto; may the King think kindly of the perils we have undergone, and cast upon us at least a glance of compassion.' The chamberlain returned a harsh answer, and ordered them to go back, telling them that the King had no need of their homage. This answer at first cast them into despair, but afterwards, imitating the moth which seeks certain death in the flame of the lamp, they persisted in their request to be admitted to the presence of the Simurgh. Their steadfastness did not remain unrewarded. The "chamberlain of grace" came out, opened a door, and presented them with a document which he ordered them to read. This contained a list of all the sins which the birds had committed against the Simurgh. The perusal of it caused them nothing less than death, but this death was for them the birth into a new life.'

Attar says: "By reason of the shame and confusion which these birds experienced, their bodies became dust, and their souls were annihilated. When they were entirely purified from all earthly elements, they all received a new life. All that they had done or omitted to do during their earthly existence passed entirely out of mind. The sun of proximity burnt them, that is to say, their former existence was consumed by the sun of the Divine Essence which they had approached, and a ray of this light produced a life which animated them all. At this moment they beheld themselves reflected in the Simurgh.* When they stole a glance at Him, He appeared to be the thirty birds themselves; when they looked at themselves, they seemed to be the Simurgh; and when they looked at both together, only one Simurgh appeared. The situation was inexpressible in words. They were all submerged in an ocean of stupefaction, with all faculties of thought suspended. Without moving a tongue, they interrogated the Awful Presence for an explanation of the mystery of apparent identity between the Divinity and his adorers.

"Then a voice was heard saying, 'The Majesty of the Simurgh is a sun-resembling mirror; whosoever contemplates Him beholds his own reflection; body and soul see in Him body and soul. As you are thirty birds, you appear in this mirror as thirty birds; if forty or fifty birds came here they would see forty or fifty. Although you have passed through many changes, it is yourselves only whom you have seen throughout.

*It should be remembered that the name Simurgh means "thirty birds."

Can the eye of an ant reach the Pleiades? Then how can your inch of inkling attain to Us?

"In all the valleys which you have traversed, in all the acts of kindness which you have done to others, it was by Our impulse alone that you were acting. All this while you have been asleep in the Valley of the Essence and the Attributes. You thirty birds have been unconscious hitherto. The name "thirty birds" belongs rather to Us, who are the veritable Simurgh. Find then in Us a glorious self-effacement, in order to find yourselves again in us.'

"So they vanished in Him for ever, as the shadow disappears in the sun. While on pilgrimage they conversed; when they had arrived, all converse ceased. There was no longer a guide; there were no longer pilgrims; the road itself had ceased to be."

Such is this allegory, or Sufi's "Pilgrim's Progress," which contains nearly five thousand couplets. Attar varies the monotony of the long speeches of the Hoopoe and the other birds by inserting anecdotes, of which the following is one of the most striking:—

STORY OF THE SHEIKH SANAAN.

The Sheikh Sanaan was one of the saints of his age; four or five times he had made the pilgrimage to Mecca; his prayers and fasts were countless; no practice enjoined by the religious law was omitted by him; he had passed through all the degrees of the spiritual life; his very breath had a healing influence upon the sick. In joy and in grief, he was an example for men, and, as it were, a standard lifted up.

One night, to his distress, he dreamt that he was fated to leave Mecca (where he was then residing) for Roum (Asia Minor), and there become an idolator. When he awoke, he said to his disciples, of whom he had four hundred, " My decision is taken ; I must go to Roum in order to have this dream explained." His four hundred disciples accompanied him on the journey. They went from Mecca to Roum, and traversed the country from one end to another. One day, by chance they saw on an elevated balcony a young and lovely Christian girl. No sooner had the Sheikh seen her than he became violently in love, and seemed to lose all regard for his religious duties. His disciples tried to rouse him out of his perilous state, but in vain. One said to him, " O thou knower of secrets, rise and perform thy prayers." He replied, " My ' mihrab '* is the face of my Beloved ; only thither will I direct my prayers." Another said, " Dost thou not repent ? Dost thou not preserve any regard for Islam ? " " No one," he said, " repents more deeply than I do for not having been in love before." A third said, " Anyone with intelligence can see that though thou wast our guide, thou hast gone astray." He answered, " Say what you like, I am not ashamed ; I break with a stone the vase of hypocrisy."

To many similar remonstrances he made similar replies. At last, finding their efforts of no avail, his disciples left him. Lost in a kind of stupor, he remained the whole night motionless before the balcony.

*The niche in the mosque wall facing Mecca, towards which Muhammadans pray.

In the morning the young Christian came out, and seeing that he did not got away, understood that he was in love. He poured out a passionate appeal, when she would have dismissed him, and refused to depart. At last she said, "If thou art really in earnest, thou must utterly wash thy hands of Islam; thou must bow to idols,* burn the Koran, drink wine, and give up thy religious observances." The Sheikh replied, "I will drink wine, but I cannot consent to the three other conditions." She said, "Rise, then, and drink; when thou hast drunk, thou mayest, perchance, be able." Accordingly the Sheikh drank wine, and, having done so, lost his senses entirely, complied with her requests, and became her abject slave. He then said to her, "O charming maiden, what remains to be done? I have drunk wine, I have adored idols; no one could do more for love than I have done." She, though she began to requite his affection, wishing still further to prove him, answered, "Go, then, and feed my swine for a year, and then we will pass our lives together in joy or in sorrow."

So this saint and great Sheikh consented to keep swine for a year. The news of his apostasy spread all over Roum, and his disciples again came to remonstrate with him, and said, "O thou who disregardest religion, return with us again to the Kaaba." The Sheikh answered, "My soul is full of sadness; go whither your desires carry you. As for me, the Church is henceforth my place, and the young Christian the happiness of my life." He spoke, and turning his face from his friends, went back to feed his swine. They

*Christians are regarded as idolators by Moslems.

wept, and looked at him wistfully from afar. At last they returned sadly to the Kaaba.

Now there was a friend of the Sheikh, who happened to have been absent when the Sheikh left Mecca. On the arrival of the Sheikh's disciples, he questioned them, and learned all that had happened. He then said, "If you are really his friends, go and pray to God night and day for the Sheikh's conversion." Accordingly, forty days and nights they prayed and fasted, till their prayers were heard, and God turned the sheikh's heart back again to Islam. The secrets of divine wisdom, the Koran, the prophecies, all that he had blotted out of his mind, came back to his memory, and at the same time he was delivered from his folly and his misery. When the fire of repentance burns, it consumes everything. He made his ablutions, resumed his Moslem garb, and departed for Mecca, where he and his old disciples embraced with tears of joy.

In the meantime the young Christian saw the Prophet appearing to her in a dream, and saying, "Follow the Sheikh! Adopt his doctrine; be the dust under his feet. Thou who wert the cause of his apostasy, be pure as he is." When she awoke from her dream, a strong impulse urged her to seek for him. With a heart full of affection, though with a feeble body, she went to seek for the Sheikh and his disciples. While she was on the way, an inner voice apprised the Sheikh of what was passing. "This maiden," it said, "has abandoned infidelity; she has heard of Our sacred House,* she has entered in Our way; thou mayest take her now, and be blameless."

*The Kaaba.

Forthwith, the Sheikh set out on the way towards Roum to meet her; his disciples essayed to stop him and said, "Was thy repentance not real? Art thou turning back again to folly?" But he told them of the intimation which he had received, and they set out together till they arrived where the young Christian was. But they found her prostrate on the ground, her hair soiled by the dust of the way, her feet bare, her garments torn. At this sight tears ran down the Sheikh's cheeks; she, when she saw him, said, "Lift the veil that I may be instructed, and teach me Islam."

When this lovely idol had become one of the Faithful, they shed tears of joy, but she was sad; "O Sheikh!" she cried, "my powers are exhausted; I cannot support absence. I am going to leave this dusty and bewildering world. Farewell, Sheikh Sanaan, farewell! I can say no more; pardon me and oppose me not." So saying, her soul left the body; the drop returned to the ocean.

Other anecdotes which occur in the Mantiq-ut-tair are the following:—

THE ANGEL GABRIEL AND THE INFIDEL.

One night Gabriel was near the Throne, when he heard Allah pronouncing words of acquiescence in answer to someone's prayer. "A servant of God," said Gabriel to himself, "is invoking the Eternal just now; but who is he? All that I can understand is that he must be a saint of surpassing merit, whose spirit has entirely subdued his flesh. Gabriel wished to know who the happy mortal was, but though he flew over

lands and seas, he did not find him. He hastened to return to the proximity of the Throne and heard again the same answer given to the same prayers. In his anxiety to know the suppliant, he again sought for him throughout the world, but in vain. Then he cried, "O God, show me the way that conducts to his dwelling." "Go," was the answer, "to the country of Roum; enter a certain Christian convent, and thou shalt find him." Gabriel hastened thither, and saw the man who was the object of the divine favour; at that very moment he was adoring an idol. Then Gabriel said to God, "O Master of the world, reveal to me this secret; How canst Thou hear with kindness him who prays to an idol in a convent?" God answered him, "A veil is upon his heart; he knows not that he is astray. Since he has erred through ignorance, I pardon him, and grant him access to the highest rank of saints."

THE CLAY OF WHICH MAN IS MADE.

One day the Prophet drank of a stream and found its taste more sweet than rose-water. As he was sitting by the stream, someone came and filled his clay pitcher from it, and the Prophet drank out of that also. To his amazement, he found the water bitter. "O God," he said, "the water of the stream and the water in the pitcher are one; disclose to me the secret of the difference in their taste. Why is the water in the pitcher bitter, and the other sweet as honey?" From the pitcher itself came the answer. "I am old; the clay of which I am made has been worked over and over again

into a thousand shapes. But in every shape I am impregnated with the bitter savour of mortality. It exists in me in such a way that the water which I hold cannot be sweet."

THE DEAD CRIMINAL.

A poor criminal died, and as they were carrying him to burial, a devotee who was passing by stood aloof, saying that funeral prayers should not be said over such an one. The next night, in a dream, the devotee saw the criminal in heaven, with his face shining like the sun. Amazed, he said to him, "How hast thou obtained so lofty a place, thou who hast spent thy life in crime, and art foul from head to foot?" He answered, "It is because of thy want of compassion towards me that God has shown me mercy, though so great a sinner. Behold the mystery of God's love and wisdom. In His wisdom, He sends man, like a child with a lamp, through the night as black as a raven; immediately afterwards he commands a furious wind to blow and extinguish the lamp. Then He asks His child why the lamp is blown out."

"Night and day, O my child, the seven spheres carry on their revolutions for thee. Heaven and hell are reflections of thy goodness and of thy wickedness. The angels have all bowed down to thee.* The part and whole are lost in thy essence. Do not, therefore, despise thine own self, for nothing is higher than it. The body is part of the Whole, and thy soul is the Whole.

*Alluding to the Koran (Sura 18) where the angels are represented as worshipping Adam by the command of God.

The body is not distinct from the soul, but is a part of it, neither is the soul distinct from the Whole. It is for thee that the time arrives when the rose displays its beauty; for thee that the clouds pour down the rain of mercy. Whatever the angels do, they have done for thee."

ANECDOTE OF BAYAZID BASTAMI.

One night Sheikh Bayazid went out of the town, and found reigning everywhere profound silence. The moon was shining at the full, making the night as clear as day. The sky was covered with constellations, each fulfilling its course. The Sheikh walked on for a long while without hearing the least sound, and without perceiving anyone. He was deeply moved, and said, "O Lord, my heart is pained. Why is such a sublime audience-hall as Thine without throngs of worshippers?" "Cease thy wonder," an inner voice replied to him. "The King does not accord access to His Court to everyone. When the sanctuary of Our splendour is displayed, the careless and the slumbering are without. Those who are to be admitted to this Court wait whole years, and then only one in a million enters."

In his latter years, Fariduddin Attar carried his asceticism to such a degree that he gave up composing poetry altogether. The story of his death illustrates in a striking way the indifference to external things cultivated by the Sufis. During the invasion of Persia by Jenghiz Khan (1229 A.D.) when Attar had reached

the great age of 110, he was taken prisoner by the Mongols. One of them was about to kill him, when another said, "Let the old man live; I will give a thousand pieces of silver as his ransom." His captor was about to close with the bargain, but Attar said, "Don't sell me so cheaply; you will find someone willing to give more." Subsequently another man came up and offered a bag of straw for him. "Sell me to him," said Attar, "for that is all I am worth." The Mongol, irritated at the loss of the first offer, slew the saint, who thus found the death he desired.

CHAPTER XIII

SUHRAWARDY*
(1153—1191 A D)

VERY few remains in writing, except their Persian poems, have come down to us from the older Pantheistic mystics. In the Kingdom of the Caliphs heretical books were suppressed by stronger measures than being placed on the Index. To express views openly at variance with the established religion was to imperil one's life. The Persian Sufis, therefore, who in their mystical works generally used Arabic, veiled their views in a sort of technical language, which was quite unintelligible to the uninitiated. Still some works are preserved which give us an insight into their tendencies.

The Sheikh Suhrawardy, who was a martyr to his convictions, must be regarded as the chief representative of this freethinking tendency in Sufism. His works have been more appreciated by the Persians and Turks than by the Arabs, among whom copies of them are no longer to be found, while they may be met with in Turkish libraries.

Suhrawardy belonged to the orthodox school of the Shafiites, and gained a great reputation for his learning. He studied jurisprudence in Maraghah, then went to Ispahan, and later to Bagdad and Aleppo, where he occupied himself chiefly with philosophical studies.

*From Von Kremer.

He gave himself the title "Disciple of the Spirit-world." In the Arabic biographies of him, his teaching is said to have aimed at overthrowing Islam; this, however, is always said of anyone who ventures to oppose the dominant orthodox party. As a matter of fact, he founded a sect who bore the name Ishrakiyya—"The Illumined." For them he composed a work, "Hikmat al Ishrak," *i.e.*, "The philosophy of illumination," containing mystical and fantastic teaching. In Aleppo, where he finally took up his abode, he seems to have exercised a powerful influence on Prince Malik Zahir, the son of the famous Saladin. The orthodox party persuaded the latter to pass sentence of death on him as a heretic, which sentence Malik Zahir caused to be carried out (1191 A.D.), but not till he had received a threatening letter from his father for his dilatoriness. Suhrawardy is said when he heard the sentence, to have quoted a Persian verse:

"It is not worth while to draw the sword."

By his own consent, he was then shut up in a separate chamber and deprived of meat and drink till he passed into the world for which he longed. His tomb is still preserved in Aleppo, where the memory of him as "the murdered Suhrawardy" has by no means faded. The inhabitants say that no tree or shrub will grow in the tomb-enclosure. His real character has, for the most part, been forgotten, and he is represented as a magician and sorcerer who possessed the philosopher's stone, and knew how to make gold. Many even believe that he was never killed at all, but disappeared, while a phantom was put to death in his place. They say that at night weird sounds are heard from his grave.

These popular legends give us reason to suppose that Suhrawardy's life and death in Aleppo really made an extraordinary impression on the people, and that his teaching penetrated more deeply than Muhammedan writers find convenient to admit. Suhrawardy's writings were preserved from entire destruction by the Persians and Turks. The most important of them are the above-mentioned Hikmat al Ishrak, Haikal-un-nur (The Temple of Light) and others. From the two first a few passages may be quoted, which suffice to show that the theosophy of this Persian Sufi took a much bolder flight than that of the Arabian Sufis, and that for it Islam was a mere outward form.

In the Hikmat al Ishrak we find the influences of two entirely different schools of thought fantastically blended into an extraordinary compound of philosophy and mysticism. In this, Neo-platonic ideas are brought into connection with a theory of light obviously derived from Zoroastrian doctrine, and both are variously modified by the influence of Islamic monotheism and presented in the abstract terminology of the Arabic Sufis. With these last, Suhrawardy found himself in harmony with regard to their " ecstatic " stages and arrival at the knowledge of God by way of intuition. He also betrays the influence of the Perso-Shiite dogma of the hidden spiritual Imams, of whom only one is believed to be on earth at any given time, and he is the highest spiritual and religious authority among his contemporaries.

The following is an abridged translation of the preface to the " Hikmat al Ishrak " : " Long have ye, O worthy friends and companions—may God protect you !—

prayed me to write for you a book wherein I should describe what has been revealed to me by way of inspiration in my lonely contemplations and soul-combats. Spiritual science is no class-privilege reserved for the elect, behind whom the doors of the spirit-world are closed, and thereby he who would learn somewhat of the supernatural is excluded. Nay, He who graciously granted us this knowledge, He, the Horizon of Illumination, is not miserly with the secrets of the other world. The worst of all ages is that in which the carpet of free spiritual investigation is rolled up, the wings of thought are cramped, the gates of intuition closed and the road of contemplation barricaded.

" The world was never wholly without philosophy, and without someone who cultivated it and was declared a philosopher by manifest proofs and facts. This man is the real Caliph or representative of God on earth, and his successors will be so, as long as heaven and earth shall endure. The difference between the old and new philosophers only consists in the variations of their phraseology and of their methods of exposition and proof. All in common acknowledge the three worlds (the earthly world, the spirit world, and the world of Deity) ; all alike are agreed in Monotheism and in their fundamental principles.

" As regards the first teacher, Aristotle, it is clear that he is of incomparable value, that his wisdom is great and his faculty of penetration profound ; yet we should not so exaggerate our reverence for him as to undervalue his masters, among whom especially are to be counted the travelling and law-giving philosophers, such as Agathodæmon, Hermes, Æsculapius and others.

The line of their succession is long; the chief classes into which they may be divided are as follows: (1) The Theosophist without philosophy; (2) the speculative philosopher without theosophy; (3) the philosopher who is equally strong in both; (4) the Theosophist who is strong in theosophy but mediocre or weak in philosophy; (5) the philosopher who is strong in philosophy but mediocre or weak in theosophy, etc. Now if the complete mastery of both philosophic and theosophic science is found in one man, *this* man is the representative of God on earth. Failing such a person, the title devolves on him who is complete in theosophy, though he may be mediocre in philosophy. Failing him, the representative of God is he who is complete in theosophy without possessing any philosophy at all. There never fails to be in the world *one* great theosophist.

"But the speculative philosopher, fully equipped in philosophy, has no claim to the rule in this earth. For there is always a theosophist on earth and he is better fitted for the post than the philosopher, as the place of God's Vicar on earth cannot remain unoccupied. By this 'rule,' however, I do not mean the possession of political power; only the Imam who is also a theosophist *may* take over the political power and exercise it publicly, or he may rule in secret. In the latter case he is termed the mystical pole ("qutb"); to him the rule belongs, even though he live in the deepest poverty. If the political power should really come into his hand, the age becomes illuminated; but if it lacks such divine guidance, it is overwhelmed by darkness.

"It is nobler to aim at a high attainment at theosophy and philosophy alike than to confine one's effort to

one or the other. This book is intended for those who devote themselves to both, and not to the latter only; in it we address ourselves only to the untrammelled thinker in the reign of theosophy; the lowest step which the reader of it should have attained, if he would derive any benefit therefrom, is at any rate to have felt a flash of the divine light reach him, and in some measure to have made it his own. Whoever merely wishes to study philosophy, let him attend the school of the Peripatetics; for that purpose it is good and sufficient. Just as we form certain sense-perceptions and recognise their conditions with certainty, and base further scientific investigations upon them, so in the spiritual realm we form certain perceptions and build upon them; but he who does not adopt this method, understands nothing of philosophy."

Continuing, he assumes a peculiar theory of light, which betrays a really Persian origin. One special light he designates by the old Persian word "Isfahbad." The Godhead Itself he calls the "light of lights." In other places he borrows from Neo-Platonism. He assumes a region in the heavenly spheres where the ideal prototypes of existing things are found. The saints and devout ascetics, according to him, have the power to call those ideal prototypes into real existence, and these can produce at their wish, food, figures or melodies, etc.

Suhrawardy's optimistic way of conceiving the world is peculiar for a Moslem. While Islam regards the world as a vale of tears, and earthly life as a time of temptation, he finds the evil in this world much less than the good. The following sentences of his work are

noteworthy: "Know that souls in whom the heavenly illuminations are lasting, reduce the material world to obedience. Their supplication is heard in the Upper World, and fate has already decreed that the supplication of such a person for such an object should be heard. The light which streams from the highest world is the Elixir of power and knowledge and the world obeys it. In the purified souls is reproduced a reflex of God's light, and a creative ray is focussed in them. The 'evil eye' is only a light-power, which influences objects and injures them." Soon after Suhrawardy had been put to death, nearly the whole of his books were committed to the flames by order to the Caliph Nasir.

CHAPTER XIV

JALALUDDIN RUMI

JALALUDDIN RUMI has been called by Professor Ethé (in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*) "the greatest pantheistic writer of all ages." However that may be, he is certainly the greatest mystical poet of Persia, though not so well known in Europe as Saadi, Hafiz and Omar Khayyam. Saadi, Jalaluddin's contemporary, seems to have been conscious of this, for when asked by the Prince of Shiraz to send him the finest poem which had been published in Persia, he sent an ode from Jalaluddin's "Diwan."

Jalaluddin ("the glory of religion") was born at Balkh, in Central Asia (1207 A.D.), where his father, Behauddin, was a professor of theology under the Sultan Khwarezm Shah. His discourses were largely attended by great and small, but for some reason he seems to have excited the Sultan's displeasure. He therefore left Balkh with the whole of his family and dependants, taking an oath not to return thither while the Sultan was on the throne. Behauddin's way led him to Nishapur, where he met the Sheikh Faridduddin Attar, who, pointing to Jalaluddin, said, "Take care! This son of yours will light a great flame in the world." Attar also presented the boy with his *Asrar-*

nama, or "book of secrets." In every town which they visited the chief men came to see Behauddin and listened to his teaching. Behauddin and his son made the pilgrimage to Mecca, after which the former settled at Konia (Iconium), in Asia Minor ("Roum"), whence the poet received the title "Rumi." Here Behauddin obtained as great a reputation as he had done at Balkh, and on his death Jalaluddin succeeded him as "Sheikh," or spiritual instructor. He soon grew tired of the ordinary round of Mohammedan learning and gave himself up to mysticism. This tendency of his received an additional impulse from the arrival in Iconium of an extraordinary man, the fakir Shams-i-Tabriz, a disciple of the celebrated Sheikh Ruknuddin.

One day Ruknuddin, when conversing with Shams-i-Tabriz, had said to him, "In the land of Roum is a Sufi who glows with divine love; thou must go thither and fan this glow to a clear flame." Shams-i-Tabriz immediately went to Iconium. On his arrival he met Jalaluddin riding on a mule in the midst of a throng of disciples who were escorting him from the lecture hall to his house. He at once intuitively recognised that here was the object of his search and his longing. He therefore went straight up to him and asked, "What is the aim of all the teaching that you give, and all the religious exercises which you practise?" "The aim of my teaching," answered Jalaluddin, "is the regulation of conduct as prescribed by the traditions and the moral and religious law." "All this," answered Shams-i-Tabriz, "is mere skimming the surface." "But what then is under the surface?" asked Jalaluddin. "Only complete union of the

knower with the known is knowledge," answered Shams-i-Tabriz and quoted the following verse of Hakim Sanai:—

> Only when knowledge frees thee from thyself,
> Is such knowledge better than ignorance.

These words made a most powerful impression on Jalaluddin, so that he plied Shams-i-Tabriz with questions and resorted with him to lonely desert places for uninterrupted converse. This led to a neglect of teaching on his part, and his pupils and adherents persecuted and ridiculed Shams-i-Tabriz, calling him "a bare-footed and bare-headed fakir, who has come hither to lead the pattern of believers astray." Their treatment caused Shams-i-Tabriz to flee to his native city without telling Jalaluddin. The latter, however, overcome by love and longing, went after him, found him and persuaded him to return.

Shams-i-Tabriz did so, and for some time longer they lived in friendly intercourse together; but Jalaluddin's disciples again began to persecute the former, who departed to Syria, where he remained two years. During this interval, in order to soften the pain of separation, Jalaluddin instituted mystical dances, which he ordered to be accompanied by the flute. This was the beginning of the celebrated order of Mevlevis, or dancing dervishes, which has now existed for over six hundred years, successively presided over by descendants of Jalaluddin. Their gyrations are intended to symbolise the wheelings of the planets round their central sun and the attraction of the creature to the Creator. They exist in large numbers in Turkey, and to this day the coronation of the Sultan of Turkey is

not considered complete till he is girded with a sword by the head dervish of the Mevlevi order.

Shams-i-Tabriz subsequently returned to Konia and perished there in a tumult, the details of which are not known. To commemorate his friend Jalaluddin composed his " Diwan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz," putting the latter's name in place of his own as the author. It is a collection of spirited odes setting forth the doctrines of Sufistic Pantheism. The following lines on pilgrimage to the Kaaba afford a good instance of the way in which the Sufi poets endeavour to spiritualise the rites of Islam :—

Beats there a heart within that breast of thine,
Then compass reverently its sacred shrine :
For the essential Kaaba is the heart,
And no proud pile of perishable art.

When God ordained the pilgrim rite, that sign
Was meant to lead thy thoughts to things divine ;
A thousand times *he* treads that round in vain
Who gives one human heart a needless pain.

Leave wealth behind ; bring God thy heart, Whose light
Will guide thy footsteps through the gloomiest night ·
God spurns the riches of a thousand coffers,
And says, ' The saint is he his heart who offers ;

Nor gold nor silver seek I, but above
All gifts the heart, and buy it with My love :
Yea ! one sad, contrite heart which men despise
More than My throne and fixed decree I prize ' ;
The meanest heart that ever man has spurned
Is a clear glass where God may be discerned.

The following ode, translated by the late Professor Falconer, is frankly pantheistic :—

I was, ere a name had been named upon earth,
Ere one trace yet existed of aught that has birth:
When the locks of the Loved One streamed forth for a sign
And Being was none, save the Presence Divine.
Named and name were alike emanations from Me,
Ere aught that was 'I' yet existed, or 'We';
Ere the veil of the flesh for Messiah was wrought,
To the Godhead I bowed in prostration of thought;
I measured intently, I pondered with heed
(But, ah, fruitless my labour!) the Cross and its Creed:
To the pagod I rushed and the Magian's shrine,
But my eye caught no glimpse of a glory divine;
The reins of research to the Kaaba I bent,
Whither hopefully thronging the old and young went;
Candahàr and Herat searched I wistfully through,
Nor above nor beneath came the Loved One to view.
I toiled to the summit, wild, pathless and lone,
Of the globe-girding Kàf,* but the Anka† had flown!
The seventh earth I traversed, the seventh heaven explored,
But in neither discerned I the court of the Lord.
I questioned the Pen and the Tablet of Fate,
But they whispered not where He pavilions His state;
My vision I strained, but my God-scanning eye
No trace that to Godhead belongs could descry.
My glance I bent inward: within my own breast
Lo, the vainly sought elsewhere! the Godhead confessed!

Jalaluddin's chief work, the Masnavi, containing upwards of 26,000 couplets, was undertaken at the instance of one of his disciples and intimates, Husam-ud-din, who had often urged him to put his teaching into a written form. One day when Husam-ud-din pressed the subject upon him, Jalaluddin drew from his turban a paper containing the opening couplets

*The mountain which encircles the world.
†The Eastern Phœnix.

of the Masnavi, which are thus translated by Mr. Whinfield :—

Hearken to the reed flute, how it discourses,
When complaining of the pains of separation :—
'Ever since they tore me from my ozier-bed,
My plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears.
I burst my breast, striving to give vent to sighs,
And to express the pangs of my yearning for my home.
He who abides far away from his home
Is ever longing for the day he shall return ;
My wailing is heard in every throng,
In concert with them that rejoice and them that weep.'

The reed flute is one of the principal instruments in the melancholy music which accompanies the dancing of the Mevlevi dervishes. It is a picture of the Sufi or enlightened man, whose life is, or ought to be, one long lament over his separation from the Godhead, for which he yearns till his purified spirit is re-absorbed into the Supreme Unity. We are here reminded of the words of Novalis, "Philosophy is, properly speaking, home sickness ; the wish to be everywhere at home."

Briefly speaking, the subject of the Masnavi may be said to be the love of the soul for God as its Origin, to Whom it longs to return, not the submission of the ordinary pious Moslem to the iron despotism of Allah. This thesis is illustrated with an extraordinary wealth of imagery and apologue throughout the six books composing the work. The following fable illustrates the familiar Sufi doctrine that all religions are the same to God, Who only regards the heart :—

Moses, to his horror, heard one summer day
A benighted shepherd blasphemously pray:
'Lord!' he said, 'I would I knew Thee, where Thou art,
That for Thee I might perform a servant's part;
Comb Thy hair and dust Thy shoes and sweep Thy room,
Bring Thee every morning milk and honeycomb.'
Moses cried: 'Blasphemer! curb thy blatant speech!
Whom art thou addressing? Lord of all and each,
Allah the Almighty? Thinkest thou He doth need
Thine officious folly? Wilt all bounds exceed?
Miscreant, have a care, lest thunderbolts should break
On our heads and others perish for thy sake.
Without eyes He seeth, without ears He hears,
Hath no son nor partner through the endless years,
Space cannot contain Him, time He is above,
All the limits that He knows are Light and Love.'

Put to shame, the shepherd, his poor garment rent,
Went away disheartened, all his ardour spent.

Then spake God to Moses: 'Why hast thou from Me
Driven away My servant, who goes heavily?
Not for severance it was, but union,
I commissioned thee to preach, O hasty one!
Hatefullest of all things is to Me divorce,
And the worst of all ways is the way of force.
I made not creation, Self to aggrandize,
But that creatures might with Me communion prize.
What though childish tongues trip? 'Tis the heart I see,
If it really loves Me in sincerity.
Blood-stains of the martyrs no ablution need,
Some mistakes are better than a cautious creed,
Once *within* the Kaaba,* wheresoe'er men turn,
Is it much to Him Who spirits doth discern?
Love's religion comprehends each creed and sect,
Love flies straight to God, and outsoars intellect.
If the gem be real, what matters the device?
Love in seas of sorrow finds the pearl of price.'

*All Mohammedans pray towards the Kaaba.

A similar lesson is taught by the apologue of the "Elephant in the Dark":—

During the reign of an Eastern sovereign, he remarked that the learned men of his time differed widely in their estimate of the Deity, each ascribing to Him different characteristics. So he had an elephant brought in secret to his capital and placed in a dark chamber; then, inviting those learned men, he told them that he was in possession of an animal which none of them had ever seen. He requested them to accompany him to the chamber, and, on entering it, said that the animal was before them, and asked if they could see it. Being answered in the negative, he begged them to approach and feel it, which they did, each touching it in a different part. After returning to the light, he asked them what they thought the animal was really like. One declared that it was a huge column, another that it was a rough hide, a third that it was of ivory, a fourth that it had huge flaps of some coarse substance; but not one could correctly state what the animal was. They returned to the chamber, and when the light was let in, those learned men beheld for the first time the object of their curiosity, and learned that, whilst each was correct in what he had said, all differed widely from the truth.

Though a pantheist, Jalaluddin lays great stress on the fact of man's sinfulness and frailty and on the personality of the Devil, as in the following lines:—

Many a net the Devil spreads, weaving snare on snare,
We, like foolish birds, are caught captive unaware;
From one net no sooner free, straightway in another
We are tangled, fresh defeats aspirations smother;
Till upon the ground we lie, helpless as a stone,
We, who might have gained the sky, we, who might have flown.
When we seek to house our grain, pile a goodly store,
Pride, a hidden mouse, is there nibbling evermore;

Till upon the harvest day, lo, no golden heap,
But a mildewed mass of chaff maggots overcreep.
Many a brilliant spark is born where the hammers ply,
But a lurking thief is there; prompt, with finger sly,
Spark on spark he puts them out, sparks which might have soared
Perish underneath his touch. Help us then, O Lord!
What with gin and trap and snare, pitfall and device,
How shall we poor sinners reach Thy fair paradise?

Again, in contradiction to logical pantheism Jalaluddin lays stress on man's free-will and responsibility, as in the following illustration :—

On the frontier set, the warden of a fort,
Far from his monarch and his monarch's court,
Holds the fort, let foemen bluster as they may,
Nor for fear or favour will his trust betray;
Far from his monarch, on the empire's edge,
He, with his master, keeps unbroken pledge;
Surely then his lord his worth will higher own,
Than their prompt obedience who surround his throne;
In the Master's absence a little work done well
Weighs more than a great one when his eyes compel;
Now is the time to show who faith and trust will keep,
Once probation over, faith and trust are cheap.

However much individual Sufis may have fallen into Antinomianism and acted as if there was no essential difference between good and evil, the great Sufi teachers have always enjoined self-mortification, quoting the saying, "Die before you die." This dying is divided by them into three kinds: "black death" (suffering oppression from others), "red death" (mortifying the flesh), and "white death" (suffering hunger). Jalaluddin illustrates this by the following parable :—

A merchant from India a parrot had brought,
And pent in a narrow cage, sorrow-distraught
With longing for freedom. One day the good man
Determined to try with his wares Hindustan;
So he said to his parrot, 'What gift shall I bring
From the land you were born in—what curious thing?'
The parrot replied, 'There are kinsfolk of mine
Flying blithe in those woods, for whose freedom I pine;
(Oh, the green woods of India!). Go, tell them my state—
A captive in grip of implacable fate—
And say, "Is it justice that I should despair
While you, where you list, can flash swift through the air,
Can peck at the pineapples, bathe in the springs,
And spread in the sunlight your green-gleaming wings?"
His message the man took, and made his word good
When he came where the parrots flew free in the wood;
But no sooner the message was given than one
Like lead to the earth fell as dead as a stone.
The merchant upbraided himself, 'It is clear
This parrot of mine was a relative dear,
And the shock has been fatal; myself am to blame.'
When his journey was finished and homeward he came,
His parrot inquired, 'Hast brought me a crumb
Of comfort in sorrow where, caged, I sit dumb?'
The merchant said, 'No; 'twas a pity you sent,
For the message you gave proved of fatal content;
As soon as I gave it one shuddered and fell
Stone-dead, as if struck by some magical spell.'
No sooner that bird's fate it heard, than his own
On the floor of its cage fell as dead as a stone.
'Alas!' cried the merchant, 'my own bird I've killed—
My own pretty parrot, so Allah has willed!'
Sadly out from the cage the dead body he drew,
When, to his amazement, straight upwards it flew
And perched on a tree. 'Lo! the message,' he said,
'My friend sent—"Die thou, as I make myself dead,
And by dying win freedom." Farewell, master dear,
I caught the plain hint with intelligence clear.

Thyself reckon dead, and then thou shalt fly
Free, free, from the prison of earth to the sky!
Spring may come, but on granite will grow no green thing;
It was barren in winter, 'tis barren in spring;
And granite man's heart is, till grace intervene,
And, crushing it, clothe the long barren with green.
When the fresh breath of Jesus shall touch the heart's core,
It will live, it will breathe, it will blossom once more.'

The last couplet is a good illustration of the different ways in which Christ is regarded by the Sufi poets and by Mohammed in the Koran. In the latter, it is true, He is acknowledged as the Word of God and the Spirit of God, but His work among men is done, having been entirely superseded by the coming of Mohammed, the last and greatest of the prophets. Jalaluddin on the other hand, as in the above couplet, speaks of Christ as still exercising healing influences. Elsewhere he says, referring to the Gospel narrative of Christ's entry into Jerusalem (not mentioned in the Koran), and taking the ass as the symbol of the body pampered by the sensualist:—

You deserted Jesus, a mere ass to feed,
In a crowd of asses you would take the lead;
Those who follow Jesus, win to wisdom's ranks;
Those who fatten asses get a kick for thanks.
Pity keep for Jesus, pity not the ass,
Let not fleshly impulse intellect surpass.
If an ass could somewhat catch of Jesus' mind,
Classed among the sages he himself would find;
Though because of Jesus you may suffer woe,
Still from Him comes healing, never let Him go.

In another place, speaking of the importance of controlling the tongue because of the general sensitiveness of human nature, he says:—

In each human spirit is a Christ concealed,
To be helped or hindered, to be hurt or healed;
If from any human soul you lift the veil
You will find a Christ there hidden without fail;
Woe, then, to blind tyrants whose vindictive ire,
Venting words of fury, sets the world on fire.

But though he speaks with reverence of Christ, he shares the common Mohammedan animus against St. Paul. As a matter of fact St. Paul is rarely mentioned in Mohammedan writings, but Jalaluddin spent most of his life at Iconium, where, probably, owing to the tenacity of Oriental tradition, traces of St. Paul's teaching lingered. In the first book of the Masnavi a curious story is told of an early corrupter of Christianity who wrote letters containing contradictory doctrines to the various leaders of their Church, and brought the religion into confusion. In this case Jalaluddin seems to have neglected the importance of distinguishing between second-hand opinion and first-hand knowledge, on which he elsewhere lays stress:—

Knowledge hath two wings, Opinion hath but one,
And opinion soon fails in its orphan flight;
The bird with one wing soon droops its head and falls,
But give it two wings and it gains its desire.
The bird of Opinion flies, rising and falling,
On its wing in vain hope of its rest;
But when it escapes from Opinion and Knowledge receives it,
It gains its two wings and spreads them wide to heaven;
On its two wings it flies like Gabriel
Without doubt or conjecture, and without speech or voice.
Though the whole world should shout beneath it,
'Thou art in the road to God and the perfect faith,'
It would not become warmer at their speech,
And its lonely soul would not mate with theirs;

And though they should shout to it, ' Thou hast lost thy way ;
And thinkest thyself a mountain and art but a leaf,'
It would not lose its convictions from their censure,
Nor vex its bosom with their loud reproof ;
And though sea and land should join in concert,
Exclaiming, ' O wanderer, thou hast lost thy road ! '
Not an atom of doubt would fall into its soul,
Nor a shade of sorrow at the scorner's scorn.
(*Professor Cowell's translation.*)

Like all quietists, Jalaluddin dwells on the importance of keeping the mind unclouded by anger and resentment, as in the following little parable :—

One day a lion, looking down a well,
Saw what appeared to him a miracle,
Another lion's face that upward glared
As if the first to try his strength he dared.
Furious, the lion took a sudden leap
And o'er him closed the placid waters deep.
Thou who dost blame injustice in mankind,
'Tis but the image of thine own dark mind ;
In them reflected clear thy nature is
With all its angles and obliquities.
Around thyself thyself the noose hast thrown,
Like that mad beast precipitate and prone ;
Face answereth to face, and heart to heart,
As in the well that lion's counterpart.
' Back to each other we reflections throw,'
So spake Arabia's Prophet long ago ;
And he, who views men through self's murky glass,
Proclaims himself no lion, but an ass.

As Ghazzali had done before him, Jalaluddin sees in the phenomena of sleep a picture of the state of mind which should be cultivated by the true Sufi, " dead to this world and alive to God " :—

Every night, O God, from the net of the body
Thou releasest our souls and makest them like blank tablets;
Every night thou releasest them from their cages
And settest them free: none is master or slave.
At night the prisoners forget their prisons,
At night the monarchs forget their wealth:
No sorrow, no care, no profit, no loss,
No thought or fear of this man or that.
Such is the state of the Sufi in this world,
Like the seven sleepers* he sleeps open-eyed,
Dead to worldly affairs, day and night,
Like a pen held in the hand of his Lord.—(*Professor Cowell.*)

As we have seen, Jalaluddin's conception of God is a far higher one than is embodied in the orthodox formula of the Koran, "Say: God is One. He neither begetteth nor is begotten." With Jalaluddin God is far more immanent than transcendent. In one place he says, "He who beholdeth God is godlike," and in another, "Our attributes are copies of His attributes." In a remarkable passage anticipating the theory of Evolution he portrays man ascending through the various stages of existence back to his Origin:—

From the inorganic we developed into the vegetable kingdom,
Dying from the vegetable we rose to animal,
And leaving the animal, we became man.
Then what fear that death will lower us?
The next transition will make us an angel,
Then shall we rise from angels and merge in the Nameless,
All existence proclaims, 'Unto Him shall we return."

Elsewhere he says:—

Soul becomes pregnant by the Soul of souls
And brings forth Christ;
Not that Christ Who walked on land and sea,
But that Christ Who is above space.

*Koran, c. 18.

The work of man in this world is to polish his soul from the rust of concupiscence and self-love, till, like a clear mirror, it reflects God. To this end he must bear patiently the discipline appointed :—

> If thou takest offence at every rub,
> How wilt thou become a polished mirror ?

He must choose a " pir," or spiritual guide who may represent the Unseen God for him ; this guide he must obey and imitate not from slavish compulsion, but from an inward and spontaneous attraction, for though it may be logically inconsistent with Pantheism, Jalaluddin is a thorough believer in free-will. Love is the keynote of all his teaching, and without free-will love is impossible. Alluding to the ancient oriental belief that jewels are formed by the long-continued action of the sun on common stones, he says :—

> For as a stone, so Sufi legends run,
> Wooed by unwearied patience of the sun
> Piercing its dense opacity, has grown
> From a mere pebble to a precious stone,
> Its flintiness impermeable and crass
> Turned crystalline to let the sunlight pass ;
> So hearts long years impassive and opaque
> Whom terror could not crush nor sorrow break,
> Yielding at last to love's refining ray
> Transforming and transmuting, day by day,
> From dull grown clear, from earthly grown divine,
> Flash back to God the light that made them shine.

Jalaluddin did not live to finish the Masnavi, which breaks off abruptly near the end of the sixth book. He died in 1272, seven years after Dante's birth. His last charge to his disciples was as follows :—

I bid you fear God openly and in secret, guard against excess in eating, drinking and speech; keep aloof from evil companionship; be diligent in fasts and self-renunciation and bear wrongs patiently. The best man is he who helps his fellow-men, and the best speech is a brief one which leads to knowledge. Praise be to God alone!

He is buried at Iconium, and his tomb, like those of all Mohammedan saints, in a greater or lesser degree, is a centre of pilgrimage. The reverence with which he is regarded is expressed in the saying current among Moslems:—

Paigumbar nest, wali darad Kitab
(He is not a prophet, but he has a book)

CHAPTER XV

SHARANI, THE EGYPTIAN
(A D 1550)

ONE of the last representatives of the mystical school of Islam is Sharani, who wrote in the middle of the sixteenth century. In his time Egypt had just been conquered by the Turks, whose military despotism took the place of the feudal anarchy which had prevailed under the Mameluke sultans. The supremacy of Islam was not affected by the change, the Turks being as sincere Moslems as the Arabs. The administration of the country was centralised in the hands of a Pasha, who resided at Cairo as governor-general. As elsewhere in the Muhammadan world, the most powerful class was that of the Ulema, or learned men. The generous gifts which the Sultan showered upon them and the privileged position he allowed them quickly reconciled them to the new regime. But there was another numerous body, who, though deprived of the substantial advantages which the Ulema enjoyed, had, however, with the masses a prestige almost as great. These were the Sufis. Poor and humble, they were lost in the crowd, whence they drew their origin, and whose miseries they shared. A smouldering animosity existed between these Essenes of Islam and the Ulema, who corresponded to the Pharisees. These last claimed to be the

exclusive depositaries of religious knowledge and divine wisdom; they administered justice and monopolised benefices.

The doctrine of the Sufis was in diametrical opposition to this. In their eyes the knowledge derived from books and theological science was far inferior to the inner perception of the supernatural, the mystic intuition to which they claimed to attain in their religious ecstacies. They regarded the theosophist as far superior in every respect to the theologian. Besides this, they considered the different sects of Islam as equally good, and attached no importance to any of the formalities of the ceremonial law, the strict observation of which was considered by the orthodox as binding on every good Moslem. Thus, the reading of the Koran, with rhythmical intonation, as practised in every mosque, had in their eyes no value. To adore God with a pure heart, according to them, was infinitely more important than all outward observances.

Such ideas could not be acceptable to the Ulemas, who saw the absolute authority in religious matters slipping from their hands. Only a moderate power of perception was needed to understand what dangers for the official hierarchy lurked in the ideas of these enthusiasts who claimed to derive divine wisdom from a source so different to that of which the Ulemas believed themselves to be the sole dispensers.

It is true that Arab mysticism had never taken such a bold flight as Persian theosophy, which proclaimed openly a Pantheistic system, in which the authority of the books revealed to different prophets was displaced by a poetic belief. According to this faith, the

universe was an emanation of God, the human soul a spark of the Divine Essence gone astray in this transitory world, but destined to return finally to God, after having been purified of its earthly stains. The Arab Sufis did not go so far ; for them the Koran was always the Word of God, and Muhammed was His prophet. They conformed externally to the precepts of Islam, but claimed at the same time to understand God and His law better than the theologians, and that not by the study of large volumes of exegesis and traditions, but by celestial inspiration. The orthodox mullahs understood the danger, and did not conceal their growing irritation against these audacious heretics. The government and the great majority of Moslems were on the side of the Ulema, but the mystics found sympathy among the people, and their ideas spread with incredible rapidity.

In the eleventh century, a man of great ability, of whom the Muhammadans are justly proud, made a vigorous effort to reconcile orthodox Islam with the Sufi doctrines current in his time. This man was Ghazzali. He consecrated the labour of a lifetime to this task, and his chief work, "The Revival of the Religious Sciences," is a veritable encyclopædia of Islam. He did not work in vain, but succeeded in erecting a system in which dogmatic theology is cleverly combined with the theosophy of the Arab school of mysticism. But Islam such as Ghazzali conceived it is no longer that of ancient times. Another order of ideas has been insensibly substituted for the austere creed of the Prophet of Mecca, the very foundations of which they have undermined. Muhammad's re-

ligious edifice remains standing, its framework and external outlines are the same; but the spirit which informs it is profoundly different. Arab mysticism has succeeded in finding a footing in the official circles of the Moslem hierarchy.

The reconciliation, however, of the mystics with the theologians was only apparent, and could not be otherwise. At the bottom of the question there were two incompatible principles. For the theologians the letter of the Koran and written tradition contained all religious knowledge. For the mystics the dead letter was nothing, and the inspiration of their own hearts was the sole source of all knowledge. Of these two principles, one subordinates reason to tradition and tends to the almost complete abdication of thought in favour of absolute faith; the other results in enthroning imagination, spiritual hallucination and mystic ecstacy. The first confines religion to too narrow limits; the second robs it of all palpable substance and positive form, and makes it as vague and intangible as the clouds.

Egypt has always been a soil favourable to the development of mystic tendencies. Christian asceticism took early root there, and during the first centuries of our era thousands of anchorites inhabited the deserts of the Thebaid, and carried on there religious exercises of extreme austerity. We do not know what secret connection may exist between the climate of the valley of the Nile and the character of its inhabitants, but if the Arab chroniclers deserve any credit, Arab mysticism originated in this country. The celebrated theosophist Zu'l Noun is known as the

first who introduced into Islam visions and mystic ecstacies. Some centuries later the famous poet Omar Ibn Faridh saw the light at Cairo, and since then Egypt has produced a long series of Muhammadan ascetics more or less famous. Sharani is one of the last of this theosophic school of Egypt. the doctrines of which he expounds in his numerous works. We do not know if the impression he made on his contemporaries was as great as the zeal with which he pleads the cause of mysticism, but up to the present day his memory is religiously preserved at Cairo, where a mosque still bears his name. The natives revere his memory as that of a saint. He himself informs us that the publication of his work entitled "Al bahr al Maurud" gave rise to serious disturbances at Cairo.

In this work Sharani expounds the duties of the true Sufi, the perfect theosophist, and at the same time in very energetic language he exposes the defects and weakness of the Muhammadan society of his day. His most virulent attacks are naturally directed against the Ulema, as in the following extract:

"We Sufis have entered into an engagement never to allow one of our body to have recourse to intrigues to obtain employment such as those practised by self-styled doctors of the law. The endeavour to obtain such a post is all the more contemptible when it has belonged to a person recently deceased who has left sons or brothers or when it is already occupied by a poor man who has no protector or support in the world. Such acts of injustice, however, are often committed by the so-called Ulema. The plot to supplant men of merit, with the aim of obtaining for themselves lucrative posts,

which they straightway dispose of for money to incompetent individuals.

"Often one man occupies more than one office, *e.g.*, that of preacher in mosques so far apart that it is impossible for him to attend to both properly; in which case he puts in a deputy-preacher (sometimes he does not even do that) and pays him part of the emolument of the post, pocketing the rest.

"We have also entered into an engagement to rise before our superiors when they appear, and to kiss their hands even when they are unjust. We do this with the Ulema, although they do not act in a manner conformable to the science which they profess."

In speaking of the Christians and the Jews, he praises their demeanour, in order to censure all the more sharply the pretensions of the Ulema. "See," he says, "how modestly they conduct themselves towards the meanest subordinates, and you will see that their manners and demeanour are more noble and worthy of imitation than those of the Ulema. They are not angry if people do not make room for them when they enter a public assembly; and if they are offered to drink water which has been sullied by the hands of children, slaves or beggars, they do not change countenance, but on the contrary consider themselves as the last of men. When they are allowed to sit down in an assembly they look upon it as a favour. They take their places with heads bent, praying God to cover their faults with the veil of his clemency, and not to expose them to the scorn of others. These are the distinctive qualities of the truly learned; for if learning does not increase the modesty of him who has it, it is good for nothing."

These extracts make it sufficiently plain with what courage the daring theosophist censured the most influential class of Moslem society in his day. Sharani reproaches the Ulema, with their ambition, their cupidity, their pride, their hypocrisy, and he advises them to confine themselves in their sermons simply to dwelling on the precepts of the moral law and to abstain from speaking of the recompenses and punishments of the future life, since the destiny of souls after death depends on God, and not on them.

As a natural consequence of these ideas, Sharani goes on to inveigh against the Turkish Government, which, wishing to create for itself a support in the powerful class of the Ulema, made them great concessions, and by doing so annoyed their antagonists the Sufis. Thus Sharani does not hesitate to say that since A.D. 1517 real learning had ceased to exist, that being the date of the conquest of Egypt by the Sultan Selim.

The lot of the Egyptian fellahin or peasants has never been an enviable one. Successive Roman and Arab dominations brought no change favourable to them. Under the Mamelukes, when the country was parcelled out among petty feudal lords ruling over their domains with absolute authority, the condition of the peasants was one of extreme wretchedness. Sharani finds that in his time the state of the agricultural class was worse than formerly.

"In past times," he says, "when a peasant died, there was often found in the corner of his house a jar, a pot or other vessel filled with pieces of gold. It was what the poor man had saved from his harvests after having paid his taxes and the daily expenses of

his family and his guests. But in our day, in order to pay his taxes, the peasant is often obliged to sell the produce of his land, the ox with which he ploughs, and the cow which gives him milk.

" If part of his tax is unpaid he is taken to prison, and often his wife and children accompany him thither. Often the Kashif or governor disposes of the hand of his daughter without consulting him, and her dowry is kept back to pay the arrears of his tax. It sometimes happens that the tax charged upon him is not really due from him at all, but from his fellow-villagers who have gone away to avoid molestation."

Elsewhere he says, " We Sufis have entered into an engagement not to buy merchandises, gardens or water-wheels, for in our time the taxes on these are so heavy that no one can afford to possess them. Let him who listens not to our counsel and acquires such property, blame himself if he has to undergo all kinds of humiliations ; if, in order that the Government may pay for naval expeditions, it demands of him in advance a year's taxes on his houses, his merchandise or his lands. Then he will say with a sigh, ' How happy are they who possess nothing.' "

It is not difficult to see in these passages a profound dissatisfaction, not only with the ruling class, but with the Government itself. Notwithstanding this, Sharani enjoins his disciples to respect the temporal authority and to submit to the laws. Passive obedience has always characterised the Oriental.

We do not know precisely whether Sharani had in view a veritable reform of Muhammadan society. Probably the contrary. He felt deeply the general

uneasiness of the time ; he understood that Islam was entering a period of decadence, but he had, as far as we can see, no clear plan for its regeneration. Mysticism, in which he was such a fervent adept, here hindered him. But this mystical tendency, which was in one respect his weakness, was his glory in another. A tone of high moral purity marks his utterances on the social and religious state of his time, and, led rather by instinct than by philosophical considerations, he hits the blot on Muhammadan society—polygamy. We may judge by the following extract : " We Sufis have entered into an engagement to espouse only one wife, and not to associate others with her.

" The man who has only one wife is happy ; his means are sufficient to support his home ; but as soon as he takes a second wife, the prosperity of his house decreases, and when he opens his money-box he finds it empty. A pure-hearted wife is a great happiness in the house. Oh, how often while I was weaving* have I stolen a glance at my wife, the mother of my son Abdurahman, sewing garments for the poor. I understood then that I had happiness in my house. Often she opened her larder which sufficed us for whole months, and distributed the contents to the poor, who quickly emptied it. May God be merciful to her."

As a religious reformer, Sharani endeavoured to restore Islam to its primitive unity. Many sects existed in it from the earliest times† four of which preserved the title of orthodox. Sharani sought to unite these sects on a common basis, and numerous passages

*Sharani was a weaver by trade.

†They are generally reckoned at 73.

in his writings attest that this idea remained with him all his life. His efforts apparently had no success, but for those who have faith in the power of ideas, it is certain that Sharani has not lived nor laboured in vain. In the East, reforming ideas do not make way so quickly as in Europe, but their effect is none the less great when they come to the front. Few details of Sharani's life are known. He informs us that he belonged to the order of the Shadiliyah dervishes, and that his instructor in mysticism was the Egyptian Sufi, Ali Khawass. He died at Cairo, A.D. 1565.

CHAPTER XVI

MULLAH SHAH
(D 1661)

MULLAH Shah was born A.D. 1584, in the village of Erkesa in Badakshan, a mountainous and inaccessible country to the north of the Indian Caucasus. His family, which was of Mongol origin, held a certain position, and his grandfather had been judge of the village. At the age of twenty-one the young man quitted his relatives and his country, and went back to Balkh, then a centre of learning in Central Asia. He made great progress there, especially in the knowledge of Arabic. After some time he left Balkh, and turning his steps southward, arrived at Kashmir, where he continued his studies, but an irresistible thirst after truth made him feel the necessity of seeking a spiritual guide, and he resolved to go to Lahore, where there lived a celebrated saint, Sheikh Mian Mir.

The reception he met with was not favourable. Mian Mir at first repulsed him, but allowed himself at last to be overcome by the perseverance of the young man, and taught him Sufi exercises according to the rule of the Qadiri order of dervishes.* The stifling heat of Lahore did not suit the health of Mullah Shah, who accordingly resolved to spend the summers in

*Founded by Abdul Qadir Gilani.

Kashmir, returning to Lahore for the winter. He led this life for several years, till he had passed through all the stages of asceticism, but his spiritual guide would not lead him to the supreme goal of mystical science, which is termed " Union with God," or " knowledge of oneself."*

Mian Mir only spoke to him of it in an enigmatic way and said, " Do not cease to study thyself and thine own heart, for thy goal is in thyself."

In the year 1626 A.D. he returned again, as usual, from Lahore to Kashmir, and practised his austerities without relaxation, when one day, by the special favour of the Divinity, and without the assistance of any spiritual preceptor, " the desired image " revealed itself to him. By this expression is understood, in mystic phraseology, union with God, and the conception of Absolute Being, which is equivalent to the knowledge of one's self. When Mullah Shah thus attained the goal of his mystical aspirations he was in his forty-seventh year, and had been engaged twenty-seven years in the spiritual exercises of the Sufis. When he returned to Lahore, he informed his spiritual guide that he had attained union with God. The latter advised him not to divulge the fact, and not to give up his ascetic practices. In Kashmir Mullah Shah had collected round him a little circle of devoted disciples. The strong emotional condition into which Mullah Shah's new spiritual experience had brought him did not prevent him from doing his best not to offend against the religious law, and he was in the habit of saying to his friends, " Whoso

*According to the reported saying of Muhammad, " He who knows himself, knows God."

does not respect the precepts of the religious law is not one of us."

Mullah Shah had always been of a retiring disposition, but in his present mood he carried his self-isolation so far that he closed the door of his house and only received his intimates at fixed times, when he dropped his habitual reserve. The spiritual power of Mullah Shah had become so great that every novice whom he caused to sit in front of him and to concentrate his mental faculties on his own heart, became clairvoyant to such a degree that his internal senses were unfolded, and the unseen world appeared to him.

Mullah Shah expressed himself in very bold terms regarding the manner with which he conceived God and His relation to humanity. Thus he said, " Since I have arrived at understanding the absolute Reality and that I know most positively that nothing exists besides God, existence and non-existence are in my eyes the same thing." In one of his poems he says, " The sage who knows himself has become God, be sure of that, my friend." In another poem, which caused a temporary estrangement between himself and the Sheikh Mian Mir, he said :

" My heart by a thousand tongues cries to me ' I am God.' What reproach of heresy can they bring against me that this utterance comes to my lips ?

" Those who had attained union with God used to say, ' I am Absolute Being.'

" But I only say what I have heard from the mouth of Sheikh Mian Mir."

In the meantime the number of his adherents daily increased ; persons of all classes in society became his

adherents; even women became capable of mystical intuitions by the effect of his prayers and without having seen him. However, the increasing number of those who wished to approach him commenced to be inconvenient, and he said, "I am not a sheikh of dervishes who receives novices and builds convents."

"Neither the mosque nor the dervish-convent attract me,
But the purity of the desert and the freedom of the open country."

In the year 1634 A.D., a certain Mir Baki, a descendant of the prophet, attached himself to Mullah Shah, and experienced in a short time ecstatic states; he then preached the doctrine of union with God without any reserve. At the same time he claimed to be free from the precepts of the religious law. The following lines were composed by him:—

"Why should my hand let go this sparkling cup of my soul,
I already realise the aspirations of to-morrow."

Which lines, rendered into prose, seem to mean, "Why should I pass my life sadly on in self-maceration and austerity? I prefer to anticipate now the delights which they speak of as belonging to the future life." This is epicureanism, pure and simple, such as we find it in the odes of Hafiz and the Quatrains of Omar Khayyam. When Mullah Shah heard of these extravagant utterances, he caused Mir Baki to be expelled from the town. At the same time the doctrines of Mullah Shah regarding union with God began to make a great deal of sensation, and a large number of influential men who belonged to the Conservative party raised against him the accusation of heresy without really understanding his teaching. They quoted some

of his verses against him, and said, " Mullah Shah is beginning to imitate Mansur Hellaj.* He should be brought to trial and sentenced to death." They unanimously drew up an indictment against him and affixed their seals ; a large number of religious functionaries joined them, and they submitted their petition to the Emperor Shah-jehan, requesting him to pronounce sentence of death against Mullah Shah. The Emperor consented, and despatched a firman to that effect to Zafer-Khan, governor of Kashmir. Shah-jehan's son, the prince Dara-Shikoh, had been absent, and only learned what had happened when he returned. He immediately went to his father and represented to him that Mullah Shah was a pupil of Sheikh Mian Mir, a man renowned for piety, and that the Emperor ought, before pronouncing final judgment, to ask the latter regarding the conduct of his former disciple. The prince concluded by saying that in such a matter haste was ill-omened, because to deprive a man of life is to pull down a building of which God is the Architect. The Emperor accepted this appeal graciously, and ordered the execution to be deferred. Meanwhile the news of the condemnation of Mullah Shah had spread and reached Kashmir, but the respite obtained by the Prince was still unknown there. The friends of Mullah Shah were in despair, and used their utmost endeavours to persuade him to fly. But he answered, " I am not an impostor that I should seek safety in flight ; I am an utterer of truth ; death and life are to me alike. Let my blood in another life also redden the impaling stake. I am living and eternal ; death recoils from me, for my

*Chapter 5.

knowledge has vanquished death. The sphere where all colours are effaced has become my abode."

"Once," he added, "I used to bar the door of my house with a bolt in order not to be disturbed by anyone, but now I will leave it wide open, in order that whoever wishes to make me a martyr may enter at his pleasure."

Mullah Shah thus awaited death in an attitude of imperturbable calm, but fate had decided otherwise. Not long afterwards the Emperor Shah-jehan went to Lahore, and in the company of Prince Dara-Shikoh paid a visit to the Sheikh Mian Mir, and questioned him concerning Mullah Shah. Mian Mir told him that Mullah Shah was apt to be carried out of himself when in an ecstatic state, and that then he sometimes spoke without observing the reserve necessary on the doctrine of union with God; but he adjured the Emperor at the same time to take no steps against his old pupil, "For," he said, "this holy man is a consuming fire, and woe to you if he be irritated, for he could destroy the world. In any case prevent the orthodox party from persecuting him, otherwise some dreadful disaster may happen."

This advice made a deep impression on the Emperor, who thanked Prince Dara-Shikoh for having prevented his carrying out the sentence of death. He said, "These theologians have tried to persuade me to kill a visionary dervish; I thank thee, my son, for having prevented my committing an act of injustice." Some time afterwards the Emperor went to Kashmir, but he did not see Mullah Shah, who had become so fond of solitude that he rarely showed himself in the city.

In 1635 A.D., the Sheikh Mian Mir died at Lahore, and in the same year one of the chief nobles of the court named Najat Khan became a disciple of Mullah Shah. About the same time, Mozaffer Beg, one of the Emperor's suite, devoted himself to his service, and his example was followed by several of his friends. But no sooner had they been initiated into the mystical doctrines than they believed themselves privileged to dispense with the prescribed fast of Ramazan and the obligatory prayers, considering that the religious law no longer applied to them. Being informed of these irregularities, Mullah Shah prayed the governor to have them removed from the town.

About this time he made a collection of his verses, among which are the following :—

"If alchemy can change dust into gold, thou marvellest ;
But asceticism is an alchemy which changes dust into God.
If a man dives into the ocean of Deity what does he become ?
As a drop which falls from the clouds into the sea."

Regarding pedantic theologians, he says :—

"Well I know these preachers who do not practise,
Their memory stored with a hundred thousand traditions,
While their mind is empty of ideas."

In 1639 the Emperor Shah-jehan came a second time to Kashmir, and took up his dwelling in the park called Zafer-abad, in a pavilion which commanded a delightful view of the lake. No sooner had he arrived than he sent for Mullah Shah, who came without delay. The Emperor received him with marked kindness and conversed long with him on subjects relating to the Sufi sciences.

This same year is remarkable for an event which had important results for Mullah Shah and his followers. The Prince Dara-Shikoh, who had saved Mullah Shah's life by his intervention, had always been marked by keen religious feeling, and often spent whole nights in prayer and meditation. He had often heard of the extraordinary powers of Mullah Shah, but had never had the opportunity of seeing him, as the sheikh still maintained his habits of retirement. Little by little, a feeling of irresistible curiosity took possession of the Prince ; he determined to see the holy man who was so highly spoken of, and one night, accompanied by a single servant named Mujahid, he left his palace and directed his steps towards the dwelling of Mullah Shah. The latter had in his courtyard an ancient plane-tree, and was in the habit of sitting at the foot of it during the night, lost in meditation. Having arrived at the house, the prince ordered his servant to wait near the door, and entered the courtyard alone. Seeing the Sheikh seated at the foot of the tree, he stopped and remained standing till the master should speak to him. The latter knew very well who the new-comer was, and that little persuasion was needed to make him one of his disciples ; but he made as though he did not see him. A long time passed thus, till the Sheikh broke the silence by asking the Prince " Who art thou ? " The Prince did not speak. Mullah Shah then said again, " Why dost thou not answer ? Speak, and tell thy name."

The Prince, filled with embarrassment, replied, " My name is Dara-Shikoh." " Who is thy father ? " " The Emperor Shah-jehan." " Why hast thou come

to see me?" "Because I feel drawn towards God, and seek for a spiritual guide." On this Mullah Shah exclaimed sharply, "What are emperors and princes to me? Know that I am a man devoted to asceticism. Is this hour of the night the time to come and trouble me? Go, and do not show thyself here a second time."

Deeply wounded by this reception, the Prince withdrew and re-entered his palace, where he spent the whole night weeping. But in spite of all his disappointment, he felt himself drawn the next night by an irresistible attraction towards the saint's dwelling, but the latter this time did not even condescend to speak to him. Mujahid, the servant who accompanied the Prince, became angry, and said to his master, "What miracles has this crabbed dervish shown you that you should come here every night and expose yourself to such indignities? Ordinary dervishes are cheerful folk, not uncivil and morose like this old man. For my own part, I set no great store by this asceticism, and the only thing that makes me uneasy is your putting faith in it." The Prince answered, "If Mullah Shah was an impostor, so far from treating me as he has done, he would, on the contrary, have prayed God to bring me to him. It is precisely his independent spirit and irritated manner which proves him to be an extraordinary man." That same night when Mujahid returned home, he was seized by fever and carried off in a few hours. Dara-Shikoh, when informed of this terrible event, was profoundly moved. He reproached himself bitterly for not having at once punished his servant's insolence, and considered the death of Mujahid as a divine punishment which menaced him also.

He immediately sent for the Qazi Afzal, one of his most devoted friends, and told him of his anxiety. The latter was a friend of Akhund Mullah Muhammad Synd, a disciple of Mullah Shah, and at his instance the Sheikh consented to see the prince.

Dara-Shikoh could not pay his visit during the day, from fear of arousing public curiosity, but as soon as night fell, he presented himself before the Sheikh, whom this time he found seated in his cell. Before crossing the threshold, the Prince saluted the holy man with profound respect, and the latter bade him enter and be seated. The cell was lighted by a single lamp, whose wick was smoking ; in his eager desire to discern the venerable features of the Sheikh, the Prince dressed the wick with his own fingers. This simple action gained him the Sheikh's affection. At the end of some days he bade him to blindfold himself, then he concentrated his attention upon him in such a way that the invisible world was revealed to the view of the Prince, who felt his heart filled with joy.

Dara-Shikoh had a sister, the Princess Fatimah, to whom he was deeply attached. As soon as he had become a disciple of Mullah Shah and his heart had been opened to the intuition of the spiritual world, he hastened to inform his sister. This news made such an impression on the mind of the Princess that she wrote to the Sheikh several letters full of humility and devotion. He read them all, but made no reply for more than a month, till he was convinced that Fatimah was animated by an invincible resolution. At last he accorded his sympathy to her also, and admitted her to the circle of the initiates. The Princess

persevered ardently in these mystical studies, and received the instructions of her spiritual guide by correspondence. She attained to such perfection that she arrived at intuitive knowledge of God and union with Him. Although the Sheikh was full of affection for all his disciples, he had a particular regard for her, and was in the habit of saying that "she had attained to such an extraordinary degree of knowledge that she was fit to be his successor."

Mullah Shah was now old and infirm; he had passed several winters at Lahore, surrounded by the care and attention of his friends and pupils. In the year 1655 A.D., the Emperor wrote to him to invite him to pass the winter with him at Shahjahanabad, his ordinary residence, but the Sheikh was beginning to suffer from weakness of the eyes, and did not feel strong enough to undertake the journey. For some years he remained in Kashmir, and would often say, "The theosophist ought to profit by length of life. My life is approaching its end; let us then enjoy our stay in Kashmir, and not leave it."

In A.D. 1658 Aurangzeb, Dara-Shikoh's younger brother, seized on the person of his father the Emperor Shah-jehan, whom he kept in confinement for the rest of his life, and had Dara assassinated in prison. Aurangzeb was a bigoted Muhammadan, and his accession to the throne threatened to have serious consequences for Mullah Shah. As soon as he had assumed the reins of government, the clerical party began to represent to him that Mullah Shah taught doctrines contrary to revealed religion. There were not wanting witnesses on the other side, but the Emperor, on hearing

the complaints against Mullah Shah, sent an order to the governor of Kashmir to send him to the capital. The governor pleaded for a delay on account of Mullah Shah's advanced age and weakness till he was strong enough to make the journey. A year thus passed by; some verses which Mullah Shah composed in honour of Aurangzeb made a favourable impression on the Emperor, and the Princess Fatimah having interceded on behalf of her old teacher, Aurangzeb revoked his first order, and merely enjoined him to take up his residence at Lahore as soon as possible.

It was not till 1660 A.D. that Mullah Shah could obey this order; he left Kashmir at the beginning of winter and came to Lahore, where he continued to live a retired life, only granting interviews to a few chosen disciples. But when from time to time he had an access of mystical emotion he would speak of union with God without any reserve, in a loud voice, and without noticing who was present. One of his friends said to him one day, "We live in a strange time, and people are disquieted by your discourses on this matter; it would be more prudent to expound your doctrines with a little more reserve." The Sheikh answered him, "Up to the present I have never been afraid for my life; books containing such doctrine are known to all, and everyone has read them. What precautions, then, at my time of life, ought I to observe? I cannot abandon or change my habits of thinking and speaking now."

Some of his other sayings reported at this time show that he had already a presentiment of his approaching death. Kabil Khan, one of his friends, said to him

one day, " Formerly our sovereign Aurangzeb loved to listen to discourses on the subject of mysticism, and I have often had the honour of reading before him passages from the Masnavi of Jalaluddin Rumi.* The Emperor was often so touched by them that he shed tears; certainly when he comes to Lahore he will wish to see you." " No," replied Mullah Shah; " we shall never see him:

' The night is great with child, see what it will bring forth.' "

In 1661 he had an attack of fever which lasted about fifteen days. That year fever became epidemic at Lahore, and on the 11th of the month of Safar Mullah Shah had another attack, which carried him off on the night of the 15th of the same month. He was buried in a plot of ground which he had already acquired for the purpose. The Princess Fatimah bought the surrounding land, and erected a shrine of red stone over his tomb. The foregoing sketch of Mullah Shah gives a general view of oriental spiritualism as it prevailed two and a half centuries ago over a great part of Asia. The first point worthy of notice in it is the immense popularity of mystical ideas at that time, and the wide influence which they exercised over all minds. Round Mullah Shah gathered persons of every condition; poor peasants as well as princes were seized with the same enthusiasm for his doctrines; the same ascetic training produced the same results in the most varying temperaments. The Master seems to have exercised a kind of magnetic influence over his neophytes. He fixes his gaze upon them for a longer or shorter time, till their inward senses

*The great mystic poet of Persia (A.D. 1207—1272).

open and render them capable of seeing the wonders of the spiritual world. All the accounts are unanimous in this respect, and they carry such a stamp of sincerity that their veracity is indisputable. We are then obliged to admit that at this period many minds shared a predisposition to religious ecstacy and enthusiasm.

Under the apparent stagnation of the East, there is continually going on a collision between two opposing forces—the official hierarchy of the Ulema, conservative to the core, and mysticism in its early phases, pietistic and enthusiastic, but gradually tending to scepticism, and finally to pantheism and the negation of all positive religion. The Mussalman hierarchy, which in its own interests desired to maintain the prestige of dogma and of the revealed law, combatted this tendency to mysticism, but, as we have seen, without success. The orthodox mullahs made fruitless efforts to obtain the condemnation of Mullah Shah, who had on his side the members of the imperial family of Delhi and the Emperor himself, all more or less imbued with mystical ideas.

The biography of Mullah Shah also throws a great deal of light on the fundamental ideas of oriental mysticism. They spring from a pantheistic philosophy in many respects, startlingly resembling those of modern times. Mullah Shah often insists that individual existence counts for nothing, and that nothing in reality exists outside of God, the Absolute Being; every particular life dissolves in this universal unity, life and death are mere changes in the form of existence. The individual is only in some way a part of the Infinite Being who fills the universe; a particle which has been

momentarily detached therefrom, only to return thither. To know oneself is therefore the equivalent of knowing God. But in order to acquire this knowledge the pupil must submit to long and painful self-discipline; he must pass through all the tests of the severest asceticism; only after he has thus prepared himself will the spiritual master open his heart and render him capable of perceiving the mysteries of the spiritual world.

But this great secret must not be divulged; it is only permissable to speak of it to the initiate, as Mullah Shah says, in the following verses:—

We must say that only One exists,
Though such a saying excite astonishment;
The universe is He, though we must not say so openly,
Such doctrines must be kept secret.

This Eastern Pantheism does not lack a certain grandeur, but it has also a dangerous side, and tends to atheism and materialism. Of this some instances occur in the life of Mullah Shah. The passage from pantheism to epicureanism is not a long one. If the human soul only possesses a transient individuality, and after death is merged like a drop in the ocean of divinity, why, many will argue, not have done with asceticism for good, and enjoy the pleasures of existence as long as possible during the little while our individuality endures? Thus Omar Khayyam says:—

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the dust descend,
Dust into dust, and under dust to lie,
Sans wine, sans song, sans singer, and—sans end.

It is precisely this dangerous side of oriental philosophy which has unhappily attained a much greater

development and an incomparably more complete success than the elevated moral systems of the chief theosophists of Persia. A mocking cynicism has been, up to modern times, a common characteristic of the great majority of Sufis and dervishes. The dangerous consequences of theosophical ideas and of oriental spiritualism in general became at an early date so apparent that Ghazzali, although a fervent partisan of Sufism, did not hesitate to avow that if these doctrines were generally accepted society would necessarily fall into a state of anarchy.

In face of the wild aberrations caused by Sufism, we should not grudge all the greater credit to the few distinguished men who, although adherents of Sufism and dominated by its doctrines, kept their characters clear of stain. In spite of their conviction that there was no individual life after death, these men spent their lives in mortification of the senses and in abstinence, and often braved death with a truly Roman stoicism.

Such shining characters are not of frequent occurrence in oriental history; but certainly Mullah Shah is one and Prince Dara-Shikoh another. In a path strewn with pitfalls he kept a name without stain and without reproach, thanks to the austere moral principles instilled into him by his master. He faced death with calm resignation, and knew how to die as a prince and as a philosopher.

NOTE.—Prince Dara-Shikoh has left a curious fragment of spiritual autobiography in his preface to a Persian translation of the Upanishads or chapters from the Vedas which he had caused to be translated from Sanskrit. It is indeed strange to see this son of a Muhammadan Emperor ranking these

selections from the Vedas above the Koran, the Pentateuch, Psalms and Gospels, all of which he says he had read. The Preface runs as follows :—

" When Dara-Shikoh, the resigned worshipper of God, visited Kashmir in the year of the Hegira 1050 (A.D. 1640), by the blessing of the Most High he met with Mullah Shah, the chief of the learned, the teacher of teachers, versed in the subtleties of " Tauhid " (Unity) ; may he be joined with God !

" As that prince already relished the pleasure of seeing the learning of each sect, had perused various treaties of the Sufi philosophers, and even composed some himself, the thirst of exploring the doctrine of the Unity (which is a boundless ocean) daily increased, and his mind attained a degree of acuteness and subtlety which would have been impossible without the immediate assistance and favour of the Divine will. Now the sacred Koran, being frequently obscure, and few at this day being found capable of explaining it, he determined to read all inspired works ; that the word of God might furnish a commentary on itself, and what is concisely expressed in one book might be elucidated by a reference to others ; the abridged being the more diffuse. With this view he perused the Pentateuch, the Gospels and the Psalms, but the unity of God was obscurely and enigmatically expressed in these works ; nor did he derive more instruction from the simple translations of hired linguists.

" He next desired to ascertain how it happened that in Hindustan the Unity of God is the frequent theme of discourse, and that the ancient philosophers of India neither denied nor objected to the doctrine of the Divine Unity, but on the contrary held it as an axiom. Unlike the ignorant race of the present day who set up for philosophers, though they have fallen into the track of bloodshed and infidelity, denying the attributes and unity of God, and contradicting the proofs of that doctrine derived from the Koran and authentic traditions ; these may be considered as banditti on the path of God.

" In the cause of this inquiry it was discovered that amongst the Hindus, four inspired books were held peculiarly sacred, viz. : the Rig Veda, the Jajur Veda, the Sam Veda and Atharva

Veda, which had descended from the skies to the prophets of those times, of whom Adam (purified by God ; may blessings attend him !) was the chief, containing rules and precepts ; and this doctrine (viz. : the Unity of God) is clearly expressed in those books. As the object of this explorer of truth (Dara-Shikoh) was not the acquisition of languages, whether Arabic, Syriac or Sanskrit, but the proofs of the Unity of the Supreme Being, he determined that the Upanishads (which might be considered as a treasure of Unitarianism) should be translated into Persian without adding or expunging, and without bias or partiality, but correctly and literally that it might appear what mysteries are contained in those books which the Hindus so carefully conceal from Moslems.

" As the city of Benares, which is the seat of Hindu science, was a dependency of this explorer of truth (Dara-Shikoh), having assembled the Pundits and Sanyasis who are the expounders of the Vedas and Upanishads, he caused a translation to be made of the latter into Persian. This was completed in the year of the Hegira, 1067, A.D. 1656. Every difficulty was elucidated by this ancient compilation, which, without doubt, is the first of inspired works, the fountain of truth, the Sea of the Unity ; not only consentaneous with the Koran, but a commentary on it."

APPENDIX I

MOHAMMEDAN CONVERSIONS

By Mohammedan Conversion is not here meant conversion from Christianity to Mohammedanism, or *vice versa*, but those spiritual crises which take place *within* Mohammedanism, as within Chritsianity, by which the soul is stung as with a regenerating shudder to use George Eliot's phrase, to rise from a notional to a real belief in God. Mohammedan theologians are as aware of this distinction as Christian ones. Thus Al Ghazzali, in his *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, is very sarcastic on the indulgence in the common expletive, "We take refuge in God," by Mohammedans without attaching any real meaning to it. He says: "If you see a lion coming towards you, and there is a fort close by, you do not stand exclaiming, 'I take refuge in this fort!' but you get into it. Similarly, when you hear of the wrath to come, do not merely *say*, 'I take refuge in God,' but take refuge in Him."

This transformation of a notional into a real belief has proved the crisis in the lives of many of the saints and mystics of Islam, without, as far as it appears, any contact on their part with Christianity. Thus, Ibn Khalliqan, in his great Biographical Dictionary, tells of Al-Fudail, a celebrated highwayman, who, one night, while he was on his way to an immoral assignation,

was arrested by the voice of a Koran-reader chanting the verse, " Is not the time yet come unto those who believe, that their hearts should humbly submit to the admonition of God ? " On this he exclaimed, " O Lord ! that time is come." He then went away from that place, and the approach of night induced him to repair for shelter to a ruined edifice. He there found a band of travellers, one of whom said to the others, " Let us set out " ; but another answered, " Let us rather wait till daylight, for Al-Fudail is on the road, and will stop us." Al-Fudail then turned his heart to God, and assured them that they had nothing to fear. For the rest of his life he lived as an ascetic, and ranked among the greatest saints. One of his recorded sayings is, " If the world with all it contains were offered to me, even on the condition of my not being taken to account for it, I would shun it as you would shun a carrion, lest it should defile your clothes."

Another striking " conversion " is that of Ibrahim Ben Adham, Prince of Khorassan. He was passionately addicted to the chase, and one day when so employed heard a voice behind him exclaiming, " O Ibrahim, thou wast not born for this." At first he took it for a delusion of Satan, but on hearing the same words pronounced more loudly exclaimed, " It is the Lord who speaks ; His servant will obey." Immediately he desisted from his amusement, and, changing clothes with an attendant, bade adieu to Khorassan, took the road towards Syria, and from thenceforth devoted himself entirely to a life of piety and labour.

A third example is that of Ghazzali himself, who, in his work *The Deliverance from Error*, has left one of the

very few specimens of Eastern religious autobiography, and one bearing a certain resemblance to Newman's *Apologia*. He was professor of theology at the University of Bagdad in the eleventh century. In his autobiography he says: "Reflecting upon my situation, I found myself bound to this world by a thousand ties; temptations assailed me on all sides. I then examined my actions. The best were those relating to instruction and education; and even there I saw myself given up to unimportant sciences, all useless in another world. Reflecting on the aim of my teaching, I found it was not pure in the sight of the Lord. I saw that all my efforts were directed towards the acquisition of glory to myself." After this, as he was one day about to lecture, his tongue refused utterance; he was dumb. He looked upon this as a visitation from God, and was deeply afflicted at it. He became seriously ill, and the physicians said his recovery was hopeless unless he could shake off his depression. "Then," he continues, "feeling my helplessness, I had recourse to God, as one who has no other recourse in his distress. He compassionated me as He compassionates the unhappy who invoke Him. My heart no longer made any resistance, but willingly renounced the glories and the pleasures of this world."

We may close this short list with the name of the Sufi poet, Ferid-eddin-Attar. He was a druggist by trade, and one day was startled by one of the half-mad fakirs, who swarm in Oriental cities, pensively gazing at him while his eyes slowly filled with tears. Ferid-eddin angrily ordered him to go about his business. "Sir," replied the fakir, "that is easily done; for my baggage

is light. But would it not be wise for you to commence preparations for your journey?" The words struck home, Ferid-eddin abandoned his business, and devoted the rest of his life to meditation and collecting the sayings of the wise.

These four cases, the highwayman, the prince, the theologian, the poet, are sufficient to show that the Recognition (anagnorisis) and Revolution (peripeteia), to use Aristotle's phrase, which turns life from a chaotic dream into a well-ordered drama, of which God is the Protagonist, may receive as signal though not as frequent illustration in the territory of Islam as in that of Christianity. They also serve to illustrate Professor W. James' thesis in his Gifford Lectures, that "conversion," whether Christian or extra-Christian, is a psychological fact, and not a mere emotional illusion.

APPENDIX II

A MOHAMMEDAN EXPOSITION OF SUFISM BY IBN KHALDOUN

SUFISM consists essentially in giving up oneself constantly to devotional exercises, in living solely for God, in abandoning all the frivolous attractions of the world, in disregarding the ordinary aims of men —pleasures, riches and honours—and finally in separating oneself from society for the sake of practising devotion to God. This way of life was extremely common among the companions of the Prophet and the early Moslems. But when in the second century of Islam and the succeeding centuries the desire for worldly wealth had spread, and ordinary men allowed themselves to be drawn into the current of a dissipated and worldly life, the persons who gave themselves up to piety were distinguished by the name of "Sufis," or aspirants to Sufism.

The most probable derivation is from "suf" (wool), for, as a rule, Sufis wear woollen garments to distinguish themselves from the crowd, who love gaudy attire.

For an intelligent being possessed of a body, thought is the joint product of the perception of events which happen from without, and of the emotions to which they

give rise within, and is that quality which distinguishes man from animals. These emotions proceed one from another; just as knowledge is born of arguments, joy and sadness spring from the perception of that which causes grief or pleasure. Similarly with the disciple of the spiritual life in the warfare which he wages with himself, and in his devotional exercises. Every struggle which he has with his passions produces in him a state resulting from this struggle. This state is either a disposition to piety which, strengthening by repetition, becomes for him a "station" (*maqam*), or merely an emotion which he undergoes, such as joy, merriment, &c.

The disciple of the spiritual life continues to rise from one station to another, till he arrives at the knowledge of the Divine Unity and of God, the necessary condition for obtaining felicity, conformably to the saying of the Prophet: "Whosoever dies while confessing that there is no god but God, shall enter Paradise."

Progress through these different stages is gradual. They have as their common foundation obedience and sincerity of intention; faith precedes and accompanies them, and from them proceed the emotions and qualities, the transient and permanent modifications of the soul; these emotions and qualities go on producing others in a perpetual progression which finally arrives at the station of the knowledge of the Unity of God. The disciple of the spiritual life needs to demand an account of his soul in all its actions, and to keep an attentive eye on the most hidden recesses of his heart; for actions must necessarily produce results, and whatever evil is in results betokens a corresponding evil in actions.

There are but a few persons who imitate the Sufis in this practice of self-examination, for negligence and indifference in this respect are almost universal. Pious men who have not risen to this class (the mystics) only aim at fulfilling the works commanded by the law in all the completeness laid down by the science of jurisprudence. But the mystics examine scrupulously the results of these works, the effects and impressions which they produce upon the soul. For this purpose they use whatever rays of divine illumination may have reached them while in a state of ecstacy, with the object of assuring themselves whether their actions are exempt or not from some defect. The essence of their system is this practice of obliging the soul often to render an account of its actions and of what it has left undone. It also consists in the development of those gifts of discrimination and ecstacy which are born out of struggles with natural inclinations, and which then become for the disciple stations of progress.

The Sufis possess some rules of conduct peculiar to themselves, and make use of certain technical expressions. Of these Ghazzali has treated in *Ihya-ul-ulum* ("Revival of the Religious Sciences"). He speaks of the laws regulating devotion, he explains the rules and customs of the Sufis and the technical terms which they use. Thus the system of the Sufis, which was at first only a special way of carrying on worship, and the laws of which were only handed on by example and tradition, was methodised and reduced to writing, like the exegesis of the Koran, the Traditions, Jurisprudence, and so forth.

This spiritual combat and this habit of meditation are usually followed by a lifting of the veils of sense, and by the perception of certain worlds which form part of the " things of God " (knowledge of which He has reserved for Himself). The sensual man can have no perception of such things.

Disentanglement from the things of sense and consequent perception of invisible things takes place when the spirit, giving up the uses of exterior senses, only uses interior ones ; in this state the emotions proceeding from the former grow feebler, while those which proceed from the spirit grow stronger ; the spirit dominates, and its vigour is renewed.

Now, the practice of meditation contributes materially to this result. It is the nourishment by which the spirit grows. Such growth continues till what was the knowledge of One absent becomes the consciousness of One present, and the veils of sense being lifted, the soul enjoys the fullness of the faculties which belong to it in virtue of its essence, *i.e.*, perception. On this plane it becomes capable of receiving divine grace and knowledge granted by the Deity. Finally its nature as regards the real knowledge of things as they are, approaches the loftiest heaven of angelic beings.

This disentanglement from things of sense takes place oftenest in men who practise the spiritual combat, and thus they arrive at a perception of the real nature of things such as is impossible to any beside themselves. Similarly, they often know of events before they arrive ; and by the power of their prayers and their spiritual force, they hold sway over inferior beings who are obliged to obey them.

The greatest of the mystics do not boast of this disentanglement from things of sense and this rule over inferior creatures; unless they have received an order to do so, they reveal nothing of what they have learnt of the real nature of things. These supernatural workings are painful, and when they experience them they ask God for deliverance.

The companions of the Prophet also practised this spiritual warfare; like the mystics, they were overwhelmed with these tokens of divine favour such as the power to walk on the water, to pass through fire without being burnt, to receive their food in miraculous ways, but they did not attach great importance to them. Abu-bekr, Omar, and Ali were distinguished by a great number of these supernatural gifts, and their manner of viewing them was followed by the mystics who succeeded them.

But among the moderns there are men who have set great store by obtaining this disentanglement from things of sense, and by speaking of the mysteries discovered when this veil is removed. To reach this goal they have had recourse to different methods of asceticism, in which the intellectual soul is nourished by meditation to the utmost of its capacity, and enjoys in its fullness the faculty of perception which constitutes its essence. According to them, when a man has arrived at this point, his perception comprehends all existence and the real nature of things without a veil, from the throne of God to the smallest drops of rain. Ghazzali describes the ascetic practices which are necessary to arrive at this state.

This condition of disentanglement from the things of sense is only held to be perfect when it springs from right dispositions. For there are, as a matter of fact, persons who profess to live in retirement and to fast without possessing right dispositions ; such are sorcerers, Christians, and others who practise ascetic exercises. We may illustrate this by the image of a well-polished mirror. According as its surface is convex or concave, the object reflected in it is distorted from its real shape ; if, on the contrary, the mirror has a plane surface, the object is reflected exactly as it is. Now, what a plane surface is for the mirror, a right disposition is for the soul, as regards the impressions it receives from without.

APPENDIX III

CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS IN MOHAMMEDAN LITERATURE

THE almost miraculous renaissance in Islam which is now proceeding in Turkey and and other Mohammedan countries reminds one forcibly of Dante's lines:

> For I have seen
> The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,
> And after bear the rose upon its top.
>
> *Paradiso*, xiii. 133.

It is not perhaps fanciful to conjecture that one of the hidden causes of this renaissance is the large quantity of Christian truth which Islam literature holds, so to speak, in solution. It is a well-known fact that the Koran has borrowed largely from the Old Testament and the Apocryphal Gospels, but it is not so generally known that Mohammedan philosophers, theologians, and poets betray an acquaintance with facts and incidents of the Gospels of which the Koran contains no mention.

Leaving the Koran on one side, in the "Traditions," *i.e.*, sayings of Mohammed handed down by tradition, we find God represented as saying at the Judgment, "O ye sons of men, I was hungry and ye gave Me no food," the whole of the passage in Matt. xxv. being quoted. This is remarkable, as it strikes directly at

the orthodox Mohammedan conception of God as an impassible despot. Other sayings attributed to God which have a Christian ring are, "I was a hidden Treasure and desired to be known, therefore I created the world"; "If it were not for Thee, I would not have made the world" (addressed to Mohammed), evidently an echo of Col. i. 17, "All things have been created through Him and unto Him" (R.V.). The writer has often heard this last saying quoted by Indian Mohammedans in controversy.

Another traditional saying attributed to Mohammed is not unlike the doctrine of the Holy Spirit: "Verily from your Lord come breathings. Be ye prepared for them." The Second Advent is also referred to in others: "How will it be with you when God sends Jesus to judge you?" "There is no Mahdi but Jesus." It is a well-known fact that a certain gate in Jerusalem is kept walled up because the Mohammedans believe that Jesus will pass through it when He returns.

Some traditions have twisted Gospel parables, &c., in favour of Mohammedanism. Thus in the mention of the parable of the hired labourers, the first two sets of labourers are said to mean Jews and Christians, and the last comers, who receive an equal wage, though grumbled at by the others, are believed to indicate the Mohammedans. Other traditions give one of Christ's sayings a grotesquely literal dress. Thus our Lord is said to have met a fox, and to have said, "Fox! where art thou going?" The fox replied, to his home. Upon which our Lord uttered the verse, "Foxes have holes," &c. Once when entering an Afghan village the writer was met by a Pathan, who asked if the New Testament

contained that verse. This shows how even garbled traditions may predispose the Mohammedan mind for the study of the Gospels.

Tabari, the historian (d. 923 A.D.), gives an account of the Last Supper and of Christ washing the disciples' hands (*sic*)—topics entirely ignored by the Koran—and quotes the saying of our Lord regarding the smiting of the Shepherd and the scattering of the sheep.

Sufi literature, representing as it does the mystical side of Islam, abounds with allusions to Scripture. Al Ghazzali, the great opponent of Averroes (1058—1111 A.D.), in his *Ihya-ul-ulum* ("Revival of the Religious Sciences") quotes the saying of Christ regarding the children playing in the market-place. In his *Kimiya-i-Saadat* ("Alchemy of Happiness") he writes, "It is said that Jesus Christ in a vision saw this world in the form of an old woman, and asked how many husbands she had lived with. She said they were innumerable. He asked her if they had died, or had divorced her. She replied that it was neither, the fact being that she had killed all." Here we seem to have a confused echo of the episode of the woman of Samaria. Again in the same work he says, "It is a saying of Jesus Christ that the seeker of the world is like a man suffering from dropsy; the more he drinks water the more he feels thirsty." In the *Ihya-ul-ulum*, the verse "Eye hath not seen," &c., is quoted as if from the Koran, where it nowhere occurs. Ghazzali was an ardent student of the Neo-Platonists, and through him the phrases Aql-i-Kull (—Logos) and Nafs-i-Kull (—Pneuma) passed into Sufi writings (v. Whinfield, Preface to the *Masnavi*).

Saadi (b. 1184 A.D.), the famous author of the *Gulistan* and *Bostan*, was for some time kept in captivity by the Crusaders. This may account for echoes of the Gospels which we find in his writings. In the *Gulistan* he quotes the verse, " We are members of one another," and in the *Bostan* the parable of the Pharisee and Publican is told in great detail.

Nizami (b. 1140) gives a story which, though grotesque, seems to show that he had apprehended something of the Christian spirit. Some passers-by were commenting on the body of a dead dog, saying how abominably it smelt, &c. Christ passed, and said, " Behold, how white its teeth are ! "

But of all the Mohammedan writers, none bears such distinct traces of Christian influence as Jalaluddin Rumi, the greatest of the Sufi poets, who is to this day much studied in Persia, Turkey and India. In the first book of his *Masnavi* he has a strange story of a vizier who persuaded his king, a Jewish persecutor of the Christians, to mutilate him. He then went to the Christians and said, " See what I have suffered for your religion." After gaining their confidence and being chosen their guide, he wrote epistles in different directions to the chief Christians, contradicting each other, maintaining in one that man is saved by grace, and in another that salvation rests upon works, &c. Thus he brought their religion into inextricable confusion. This is evidently aimed at St. Paul, and it is a curious fact that Jalaluddin Rumi spent most of his life at Iconium, where some traditions of the apostle's teaching must have lingered. Other allusions to the Gospel narrative in the *Masnavi* are found in the mention of

John the Baptist leaping in his mother's womb, of Christ walking on the water, &c., none of which occur in the Koran. Isolated verses of Jalaluddin's clearly show a Christian origin:

> I am the sweet-smiling Jesus,
> And the world is alive by Me.
>
> I am the sunlight falling from above,
> Yet never severed from the Sun I love.

It will be seen that Jalaluddin gives our Lord a much higher rank than is accorded to Him in the Koran, which says, "And who could hinder God if He chose to destroy Mary and her son together?"

A strange echo of the Gospel narrative is found in the story of the celebrated Sufi, Mansur-al-Hallaj, who was put to death at Bagdad, 919 A.D., for exclaiming while in a state of mystic ecstacy, "I am the Truth." Shortly before he died he cried out, "My Friend (God) is not guilty of injuring me; He gives me to drink what as Master of the feast He drinks Himself" (Whinfield, preface to the *Masnavi*). Notwithstanding the apparent blasphemy of Mansur's exclamation, he has always been the object of eulogy by Mohammedan poets. Even the orthodox Afghan poet, Abdurraham, says of him:

> Every man who is crucified like Mansur,
> After death his cross becomes a fruit-bearing tree.

Many of the favourite Sufi phrases, "The Perfect Man," "The new creation," "The return to God," have a Christian sound, and the modern Babi movement which has so profoundly influenced Persian life and thought owes its very name to the saying of Christ,

" I am the Door " (" Anaʾul Bab "), adopted by Mirza Ali, the founder of the sect.

When Henry Martyn reached Shiraz in 1811, he found his most attentive listeners among the Sufis. " These Sufis," he writes in his diary, " are quite the Methodists of the East. They delight in everything Christian except in being exclusive. They consider they all will finally return to God, from whom they emanated."

It is certainly noteworthy that some of the highly educated Indian converts from Islam to Christianity have been men who have passed through a stage of Sufism, *e.g.*, Moulvie Imaduddin of Amritsar, on whom Archbishop Benson conferred a D.D. degree, and Safdar Ali, late Inspector of Schools at Jabalpur. In one of the semi-domes of the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople is a gigantic figure of Christ in mosaic, which the Mohammedans have not destroyed, but overlaid with gilding, yet so that the outlines of the figure are still visible. Is it not a parable ?

APPENDIX IV

CHRIST IN MODAMMEDAN TRADITION.

THE following brief article is an attempt to bring together some of the passages in Mohammedan writers in which Christ is accorded a higher place than in the Koran, and in which deeds and words of His are mentioned regarding which the Koran is quite silent. For though the Koran calls Him 'the Spirit of God' and 'a Word proceeding from Him,' at the same time it says 'What could hinder God if He chose to destroy the Messiah and His mother both together?'

In the traditional sayings of Mohammed collected by Al Bokhari, accepted by all Sunni Mohammedans, we have the following:—

1st. The sinlessness of Christ. The Prophet said, 'Satan touches every child at its birth and it cries out from the touch of Satan. This is the case with all, except Mary and her son.'

2nd. A famous utterance of Christ is attributed to God. The Prophet said, 'At the resurrection God shall say, "O ye sons of men, I was sick and ye visited Me not." They shall say, "Thou art the Lord of the worlds how should we visit Thee?" He will say, "A certain servant of Mine was sick; if you had visited him you would have found Me with him."' This tradition is noteworthy as it brings out the affinity between God and man which the Koran for the most part ignores.

3rd. Christ returning to judgment. The Prophet said, 'How will it be with you when God sends back the Son of Mary to rule and to judge (hakiman, muqsitan)?'

In the 'Awarifu-l-Mawarif of Shahabu-d-Din Suhrawardi the doctrine of the New Birth is definitely attributed to Christ: 'The death of nature and of will which they call "the second birth" even as Christ has written.'

Ghazzali in the Ihya-ul-ulum thus refers to St. Matt. xi. 17: 'Some one said, "I saw written in the Gospel, We have sung to you but ye have not been moved with emotion; we have piped unto you but ye have not danced."' He also quotes St. Matt. vi. 25, 'Jesus said, Consider the fowls, etc.'

The historian Tabari mentions the institution of the Last Supper, Christ's washing His disciple's hands, requesting them to watch with Him, predicting Peter's denial, and quotes the text, 'The shepherd shall be smitten, and the sheep shall be scattered.'

In the Bostan of Sa'di the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee takes the following curious shape:—

In Jesus' time there lived a youth so black and dissolute,
That Satan from him shrank appalled in every attribute;
He in a sea of pleasures foul uninterrupted swam
And gluttonized on dainty vices, sipping many a dram.
Whoever met him on the highway turned as from a pest,
Or, pointing lifted finger at him, cracked some horrid jest.
I have been told that Jesus once was passing by the cave
Where dwelt a monk who asked Him in,—
When suddenly that slave of sin appeared across the way,
Far off he paused, fell down and sobbingly began to pray;
And like a storm of rain the tears pour gushing from his eyes.
'Alas, and woe is me for thirty squandered years,' he cries;
The pride-puffed monk self-righteous lifts his eyebrows with a sneer,

And haughtily exclaims, 'Vile wretch! in vain hast thou
come here.
Art thou not plunged in sin, and tossed in lust's devouring sea?
What will thy filthy rags avail with Jesus and with me?
O God! the granting of a single wish is all I pray,
Grant me to stand far distant from this man at Judgement Day.
From heaven's throne a revelation instantaneous broke,
And God's own thunder-words through the mouth of Jesus
spoke:
'The two whom praying there I see, shall equally be heard;
They pray diverse,—I give to each according to his word.
That poor one thirty years has rolled in sin's most slimy steeps,
But now with stricken heart and streaming eyes for pardon
weeps.
Upon the threshold of My grace he throws him in despair,
And faintly hoping pity pours his supplications there.
Therefore forgiven and freed from all the guilt in which he lies
My mercy chooses him a citizen of paradise;
This monk desires that he may not that sinner stand beside,
Therefore he goes to hell and so his wish is gratified.'

(*Alger: Poetry of the Orient.*)

It is refreshing to find one of the classical Moslem writers so strongly denouncing self-righteousness. The poet Nizami in the following apologue seems to have caught no little of the spirit of the Gospel:—

One evening Jesus lingered in the market-place
Teaching the people parables of truth and grace,
When in the square remote a crowd was seen to rise
And stop with loathing gestures and abhorring cries.
The Master and His meek Disciples went to see
What cause for this commotion and disgust could be,
And found a poor dead dog beside the gutter laid;
Revolting sight! at which each face its hate betrayed.
One held his nose, one shut his eyes, one turned away,
And all amongst themselves began loud to say,
'Detested creature! he pollutes the earth and air!'

'His eyes are blear!' 'His ears are foul!' 'His ribs are bare!'
'In his torn hide there's not a decent shoe-string left!'
'No doubt the execrable cur was hung for theft!'
Then Jesus spake and dropped on him this saving wreath:
'Even pearls are dark before the whiteness of his teeth!'

(*Alger: Poetry of the Orient.*)

The entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem is referred to in the following passage from the Masnavi of Jalaluddin Rumi:—

Having left Jesus, thou cherishest an ass,
And art perforce excluded like an ass;
The portion of Jesus is knowledge and wisdom,
Not so the portion of an ass, O assinine one!
Thou pitiest thine ass when it complains;
So art thou ignorant, thine ass makes thee assinine.
Keep thy pity for Jesus, not for the ass,
Make not thy lust to vanquish thy reason.

(*Whinfield's Translation*).

Elsewhere in the Masnavi Jalaluddin Rumi says:—

Jesus, thy Spirit, is present with thee;
Ask help of Him, for He is a good Helper.

In the Diwan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz, by the same author, we have the lines:—

I am that sweet-smiling Jesus,
And the world is alive through Me.

Elsewhere he says, 'The pure one is regenerated by the breath of Jesus.' It is a significant fact that Jalaluddin Rumi spent most of his life at Iconium, where very likely some apostolic traditions lingered.

One aspect of our Lord which has strongly impressed itself on the Mohammedan imagination is His home-

lessness.* Once on entering a Pathan village the writer was met by a youth, who asked, 'Is this verse in the Injil: "The Son of Mary had nowhere to lay His head"' In the Qissas-al-ambiya (Stories of the Prophets) this takes the following grotesque shape:—

One day Jesus saw a fox running through the wilderness. He said to him, 'O fox! whither art thou going?' The fox answered, 'I have come out for exercise; now I am returning to my own home.' Jesus said, 'Every one has built himself a house; but for Me there is no resting-place.' Some people who heard it, said, 'We are sorry for Thee and will build Thee a house.' He replied, 'I have no money.' They answered, 'We will pay all the expenses.' Then he said, 'Very well, I will choose the site.' He led them down to the edge of the sea and, pointing where the waves were dashing highest, said, 'Build Me a house there.' The people said, 'That is the sea, O Prophet! how can we build there?' 'Yea, and is not the world a sea,' He answered, 'on which no one can raise a building that abides?'

A similar echo of Christ's words is found in the famous inscription over a bridge at Fatehpur Sikri: 'Jesus (upon Whom be peace) said, "The world is a bridge; pass over it, but do not build upon it."'

This keen sense of the transitoriness of everything earthly is a strongly-marked feature of the Oriental mind, and characterized all their saints and mystics. There is no wonder that this side of the gospel should make a special appeal to Orientals, and that the Fakir-missionary should seem to them to approximate most closely to his Master.†

* In one tradition He is called 'Iman al ashin,' 'Leader of the wanderers.'

† Although Mohammed said, 'There is no monkery in Islam,' and rebuked one of his followers who showed a tendency to it, celibacy and homelessness have often marked the saints of Islam.

The following account of the trial of our Lord before the Sanhedrin and Pilate which occurs in the Dabistan of Mohsin Fani (A.D. 1647) approximates more nearly to the Gospel narrative than that which is ordinarily current among Mohammedan writers :—

When Jesus appeared, the high-priest said, ' We charge Thee upon Thy oath by the living God, say art Thou the Son of God ? ' The blessed and holy Lord Jesus replied to him, ' I am what thou hast said. Verily We say unto you, you shall see the Son of man seated at the right hand of God, and He shall descend in the clouds of heaven.' They said, ' Thou utterest a blasphemy, because, according to the creed of the Jews, God never descends in the clouds of heaven.'

Isaiah the prophet has announced the birth of Jesus in words the translation of which is as follows :—' A branch from the root of I'shai shall spring up, and from this branch shall come forth a flower in which the Spirit of God shall dwell . verily a virgin shall be pregnant and bring forth a Son.' I'shai is the name of the father of David.

When they had apprehended Jesus, they spat upon His blessed face and smote Him. Isaiah had predicted it. ' I shall give up My body to the smiters, and My cheek to the diggers of wounds. I shall not turn My face from those who will use bad words and throw spittle upon Me.' When Pilatus, a judge of the Jews, scourged the Lord Jesus in such a manner that His body from head to foot became but one wound, so was it as Isaiah had predicted, ' He was wounded for our transgressions ; I struck Him for His people.' When Pilatus saw that the Jews insisted upon the death and crucifixion of Jesus, he said, ' I take no part in the blood of this Man ; I wash my hands clean of His blood.' The Jews answered, ' His blood be on us and on our children.' On that account the Jews are oppressed and curbed down in retribution of their iniquities. When they had placed the cross

One of them, Bishr Hafi, being asked why he did not marry, answered, ' I am afraid of that verse in the Koran, " The rights of women over men are the same as the rights of men over women." '

upon the shoulders of Jesus and led Him to die, a woman wiped with the border of her garment the face, full of blood, of the Lord Jesus. Verily she obtained three images of it and carried them home; the one of these images exists still in Spain, the other is in the town of Milan in Italy, and the third in the city of Rome.

The same author, Mohsin Fani, says :—

The Gospel has been translated from the tongue of Jesus into different languages, namely, into Arabic, Greek, Latin, which last is the language of the learned among the Firangis; and into Syriac, and this all learned men know.

Fragments of our Lord's teaching are found not only in religious but also in secular Mohammedan books; thus in the Kitab Jawidan of Ibn Muskawih we have the following :—

The hatefullest of learned men in the eyes of God is he who loves reputation and that room should be made for him in the assemblies of the great, and to be invited to feasts. Verily I say they have their reward in the world.

In the Kitab-al-Aghani, a history of Arabic poetry, it is related :—

Satan came to Jesus and said, 'Dost Thou not speak the truth?' 'Certainly,' answered Jesus. 'Well then,' said Satan, 'climb this mountain and cast Thyself down.' Jesus said, 'Woe to thee, for hath not God said, O Son of Man, tempt Me not by casting thyself into destruction, for I do that which I will.'

From the above instances taken from well-known Mohammedan writers it will be seen that the Christ of post-Koranic tradition is far more life-like than the Christ of the Koran. The latter is a mere lay-figure, bedecked with honorific titles indeed, such as the 'Spirit of God and a word proceeding from Him,' and working

miracles, but displaying no character. In the post-Koranic writers, on the other hand, we have His sinlessness, His return to judgment, His humility, His unworldliness, His sufferings, His doctrine of the New Birth, topics upon which the Koran is entirely silent. An open-minded Moslem perusing the above passages in the original Persian and Arabic (and many might be added) would certainly gain a far higher conception of our Lord than from anything he would find in the Koran.

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